

PLAY & LEARN AT HOME

DECEMBER 2020

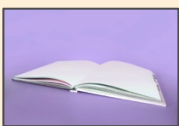


Learn about print motivation and how to encourage the love of reading!

LEARNING ON THE GO

A big part of becoming a reader is what we call **print motivation** – that simply means a child is interested in, and excited about, books and learning to read. The best way to grow this is by snuggling up together and reading.

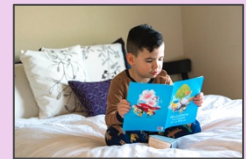
Often, a child will choose a book to read and it's one you've shared many, many, MANY times before. While this may be boring for the adult, **repetition is REALLY good for kids:** it strengthens brain connections and solidifies the story and the vocabulary in the child's mind. How can you make that 100th reading of the same book more interesting? Turn the book upside down and see if your child notices. Tell something out of order and have them correct it. Ask them to "read" the book to you for a change. While they may not be actually reading the words, they ARE using the pictures and their memory to retell the story, which are important early literacy skills, as well as growing their confidence and beginning to see themselves as readers.



Why not make your own books? Purchase pre-made blank books from the bookstore or office supply store or simply staple or glue a few sheets of paper together. Have your child draw some pictures on the pages and then tell you what's happening. You can write what they say so it becomes a REAL book with words and pictures. If you'd like, have them create a book to commemorate a special trip, day or memory. These will be fun to pull out and re-read throughout the year.

FAMILY PLACE

Reading is the best! (Say all the librarians.) When children learn to love books and being read to, they are eager to learn to read themselves. If learning to read gets tough, a little motivation can help a child to hang in there. To foster the love of reading, think about giving reading and books some extra special treatment.



Here are a few ideas:

- Create a special and cozy reading corner, nook or indoor reading tent! Decorate your special space to show how much you value this part of your family's routine.
- Traveling by car for the holidays? Be sure to take along an audio book that the whole family can enjoy. When everyone listens to the same stories, those stories become part of your family's shared history. Download E-audio books from home or check out audiobooks on CD and picture book kits (book with accompanying CD).
- Make the "Book on Every Bed" tradition a part of your family's holiday tradition. Wrap a book and leave it on the foot of every child's bed as a surprise treat on your holiday. Adults like this, too! Be sure to carve out time to read during hectic holiday celebrations.

LITTLE EXPLORERS

STEAM – science, technology, engineering, art and math – can happen in everyday activities like cooking or baking. During the holidays, look over a cookbook and choose a simple recipe to try to create together. Reading and writing family holiday family recipes and following instructions help develop print motivation and a love of reading! You're helping create emotional connections and memories to this special family tradition of making and baking together.

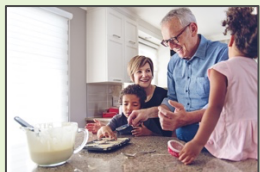
The kitchen was made for math! Young children can help measure ingredients with a scale or measuring cups, or count the number of plates and cups that need to be set on the table.

Science is also a big part of what happens in the kitchen. Talk to your children about the textures of food and let them touch the ingredients. Observe patterns, similarities, and differences in fruits and vegetables:

- Why do you think some foods like bananas have thick peels, while others like apples have thin, edible peels?
- Why do you think some foods are dry and some are juicy?

You also have an opportunity to talk to your child about the changes in states of matter:

- What do you think will happen when dry ingredients are mixed in with the wet ingredients?
- I wonder why the water turns to steam if it gets really hot.
- I wonder why food changes when it's cooked or combined with other foods.



Collect special recipes! Does your little one have a few favorite recipes? Add recipe cards to a ring, and write and decorate a title card together: "Henry's favorite snacks!"

READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!

Fostering the love of reading is serious business, but building that relationship to books doesn't have to be! All the ideas below will show your child that reading is fun. Books will have a fuzzy place in their hearts. They'll be motivated to read with you, as well as learn to read on their own.

- Use silly voices! Pick an accent or tone of voice before reading and try to stick with it through the whole book. Need an idea? Try:
 - Squeaky like a mouse. Eeeep!
 - Gruff like a monster. Rawr!
 - Be a pirate. Yarrrrrgh!
 - Sing it like an opera singer. LAAAAAH!
 - Fancy like a queen. Dah-ling.
 - Cheer each word like a sports fan. GO TEAM GO!
 - Start each sentence soft and get progressively louder, like a volcano. rrrrrRRRUUUMMBBLLLE.
 - Like. A. Ro. Bot. B-E-E-P.
- Children love to correct their grownups. Pretend you've never read a book before and hold it the wrong way. Start reading it from the back. Ask your child to help you fix the book. Is that right? No!
- Let children turn the pages. Skip ahead or go back, the power is in their hands.
- Books don't have to be just for reading, they can also be blocks! See how high you can stack them.
- Does your bookshelf bring your child joy? If not, let them rearrange it in their own style.
- Let your child "catch" you reading. Model your enjoyment of reading and they'll want to read, too.

If they don't want to read at that moment, stop reading, even if you're in the middle of a book. **It's not the quantity of time that counts, it's the quality.**