

The Read Aloud Challenge: The Importance of Reading Aloud to Children
Generations ago reading aloud to children was an everyday family experience. Children would be exposed to language through listening to chapter books from an experienced reader. Listening to an expert model the act of reading supported the value of reading and the importance of language. In many cultures around the world this tradition is still present. But with busy schedules, and distractions from television, computer and video games, the tradition of reading together as a family in the United States has greatly diminished. Bring reading back into the family is an important activity that will support your child's academic, emotional, physical, and spiritual being.

Reading to a child for 20 minutes each day improves reading ability, self esteem, and grades! Children who read just 20 minutes a day are exposed to 2 million words a year! Children who spend 5 minutes are exposed to only 282,000 words a day. Children who spend less than a minute reading each day only learn 8,000 new words a year. Reading aloud helps children to become better language listeners. Listening to language promotes decoding, comprehension, and fluency skills. Listening to books provides experiences to new vocabulary words and a context that supports the word. It creates a positive attitude towards books and reading.

Get everyone together on the couch and instead of turning on the television ... read together!! Reading to children can be a rewarding experience for both the children and the adults in the family. Reading relaxes, lowers stress, and lowers blood pressure giving a sense of calm. It can be a great way to spend time together and wind down after a busy day. Sharing books as a family can be a healthy way to decrease energy and support family discussion. Reading aloud is an activity that should be shared throughout the grades and into middle school grades as well! Exposing children to books will introduce new ideas that children might not be available to them in independent reading. Reading aloud to children has shown to lengthen attention spans. In addition, reading to children strengthens the bonds between the adult reader and the child providing a positive connection that is important to the child's development and growth.

“Few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world of the written word; Someone has to show them the way.”

Orville Prescott,

From “A Father Reads to his children

Books for Parents:

The Read Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease

A Father Reads to his children by Orville Prescott

Websites:

Readtothem.org

Readingrockets.org

Getreadytoread.org

Create-a-reader.com (an AOL site)

