




Car Ride Fun:  
Listening to Audio books  
as a family

One of our favorite family traditions is listening to audio books in the car. Some stories we choose for long car rides and vacations. Other stories we choose for the daily drain of commuting around town to dance practice and soccer games. This has proven to be a wonderful experience for my children who are 12, 10 and 7.

Before listening to the story, we enjoy looking up information about the author on author websites and looking for pictures of the setting on  .

While we are listening to the story, we stop and talk about what is happening. We look up unknown words on [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com) and find out more information about unfamiliar topics.

After listening to stories we have a book party complete with featured foods from the story. Sometimes, we take a special field trip that concerns a topic or character in the book.



The latest book we listened to was Rascal

by Sterling North. The main character is a young boy, Sterling, who befriends a raccoon as a pet. As a family, we talked about the differences between today's children and the children of past generations. We discussed if parents should be permissive like Sterling's father who let his son build a canoe in the middle of the living room! Nicholas said, "*Mom, you would never let us do that!*"

Sharing a book in this way allows us to experience literature as a family. Listening to audio stories improves listening skills and attention skills. It is a way for children to develop new vocabulary words in context. But mainly we love this as a family because it is a way for us to learn together. We revisit the experiences of many of the characters when we listen to new stories. Someone might say... "this is just like the book about..." or "this character reminds me of when we listen to..."

Audio books can be found FREE at your public library but can also be purchased online. I hope you have a chance to try this with your own family!