

READING ALOUD TO YOUR CHILDREN

Reading aloud is a gift you can freely give to your children from the day they are born until the time they leave the nest. Children's reading experts agree that reading aloud offers the easiest and most effective way to help children become lifelong readers. It can also be as much fun for you as it is for your children.

A child whose day includes listening to lively stories is more likely to grow up loving books and wanting to read them. To spark this desire in your children, you may want to try some of these suggestions offered by Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), a national nonprofit organization that inspires youngsters to read.

- Set aside a special time each day to read aloud to your children. Fifteen minutes a day is an ideal time.
- Vary your selections. For very young children, look for picture books with art work and stories that are simple, clear and colorful.
- Read slowly and with expression. The more you ham it up, the more your children will love it. Try substituting your child's name for a character in the story.
- Have your children sit where they can see the book clearly, especially if it is a picture book.
- Allow time for your children to settle into the story, as well as time afterwards to talk about it.
- As you read aloud, encourage your children to get in on the act. Invite them to describe pictures, read bits of text, or predict what will happen next. It is even fun to dramatize the roles in the story or read lines of dialogue.
- Children like a sense of completion, so finish what you begin. If the book is lengthy, find an appropriate stopping point, such as the end of a chapter.
- Continue to read aloud to your children even after they begin school and are independent readers. There is no age limit to reading to your children.
- Teenagers may enjoy reading aloud to a younger sibling. They often like to revisit some of their old favorites.

