

# How to Be Your Child's Read-Aloud Hero

## Make Reading and Story Telling Part of Every Day Family Life

Books at bedtime are always a wonderful way to wind down, but try to find at least one other time each day that you and your child can enjoy a book together.

- Try books for breakfast, lunch, or dinner! Your child might even eat those last few bites and stay at the table a bit longer when you are reading aloud.
- Enjoy a few books when your child comes home from school to reconnect after a busy day.
- Take a few favorite books and go outside to read in good weather before or after supper.
- Pack books to take along in the car, on the bus, or to appointments in case there is a wait. Make it a habit to never leave the house without a few books, just as you wouldn't leave your house without a snack, shoes, or jacket for your child.
- If you don't have a book handy take turns with your child and retell stories from books.
- Make up your own stories. Play "Tell me a story about your day." You can say, "Tell me a story about when you played outside at school today. It can be real or pretend." Be sure to tell a story of your day, too—real or pretend. (Variations : Tell me a story about—when you were a baby, your birthday, your pet monster, your trip to the moon.)

## Have a Home Full of Books and Reading

Children need to have books at home, close at hand, and have lots of time looking at them and hearing them read aloud so they become comfortable and familiar with books and stories.

- Be sure that books are where children can reach them.
- Instead of keeping all your books in one place, look for baskets or bins at yard sales or have your child help you decorate some cardboard "book boxes" so you can have small collections of books throughout your home.
- Visit the library for books to borrow and for story time.
- Find books to keep—at yard sales, trading with friends, at used book stores.
- Start a neighborhood reading club where children get together regularly to read and share books.
- Read aloud often, even after your children can read by themselves. Children can listen to stories at a higher comprehension level than they can read on their own, and when you read aloud to them you can talk about the story together.

## Bring Books to Life!

Children's books are full of fun ideas and wonderful messages. When children have a chance to think more about these ideas through play they understand them better.

- After reading a book get some paper, crayons, and markers and invite your child to draw what he or she liked best about the book. Write their words next to their drawing.
- Act out parts of the story. Children love to pretend and when they pretend to be book character they get to remember the story and use new words. When you play with them it makes the experience even more filled with fun and learning.
- Do what the character in the book did. Go on a pretend bear hunt (or monster hunt) outside, bake a gingerbread man, or make a space ship out of box.

## Help Children Fall in Love with Books

When children love to do something, they do it over and over again. Loving books is a habit that is never too early to start and that will bring a lifetime of joy.

- Make special cozy places to snuggle and read together and for children to look at books alone.
- Make a reading cave by putting a blanket over your kitchen table, Crawl into the blanket cave with your little bear and read share some books! Chances are your little bear will want to continue to read in the cave.
- Find a tree in your yard or in a park and make it your “reading tree” to lean against and share some books outside.
- Use books to explore the world and learn new things together.
- Books are a way for you and your child to go on new adventures together to places you have never been, or to learn about wild animals that you will never see.
- Read children’s favorite books over and over if they ask. For children, hearing the same book over and over again is like visiting with an old friend.
- Let children choose books that interest them. It’s amazing to watch your child become an expert on construction vehicles or dinosaurs or other topics you may not know much about. This knowledge makes a child feel confident.
- It’s OK for you to also choose some stories that you enjoy reading aloud! Your enthusiasm for a book is contagious!
- Bring a flashlight outside and read a bedtime story snuggled on a blanket under the nighttime sky.

## Start Family Reading and Book Traditions

Traditions are activities that a family has enjoyed together in the past and are likely to continue in the future because they value them. When sharing books becomes part of your family’s tradition, books will become part of your child’s future.

- Show children that books are special by including books as gifts for birthdays, holidays, and special occasions—for adults as well as children.
- Have special **Family Ten Minute Reading Times** when screens are turned off and everyone takes a break and reads! It’s a noisy and busy world for you and your children. Turning off the TV and not looking at your phone while reading together will help both you and your child concentrate on the words and pictures in the book and enjoy the quite time together.
- Once a month (or maybe once a week!) have an **At Home with Books** night. Make special snacks, snuggle up and read, read, read!

**BOOKS**  
are my  
**SUPER**  
**POWER**  
**Read-Aloud Challenge**