

Reading With Your Children

Reading is one of the most important gifts a parent can do with a child. Reading can open new worlds for your child and for you. Reading to and with your children can improve their school work. Good grades help children resist the temptations of alcohol and other drugs when they are adolescents.

Keep the reading times fun. Children will try to avoid things they do not like. Start when children are babies. First, they enjoy the time with you and they love the sound of your voice plus you are establishing a pattern for later. Also, looking at the pictures helps eye muscles. Hearing the sounds helps them develop new vocabulary.

Read slowly to your children. They will understand better. If you are uncomfortable about your reading ability check with your school, library or community college for classes that may help you. You could also try reading the story when you are alone first to give yourself a chance to practice.

First, start by getting comfortable, both of you. For young babies and toddlers point at pictures and say the names of things on the page. If the child is old enough, have the child name the objects. Talk about the pictures. Praise your child when he or she names an object correctly.

As your child ages ask questions about the pictures before you read the page.



You might ask what the person in the pictures is doing. You might ask what the child sees on the page. As you read the story ask your child questions about the story such as 'Why did he do that?' or 'What happens next?' Ask your child what he or she liked about the story and what he did not like. For four year olds and over, ask your child if he can remember the events in the story.

When your child wants to start reading or for an older child having difficulty reading, you could try paired reading. Select a book that is appropriate for the child's level or better yet have the child select the book. If the child is a nonreader select a book he knows well, if the child does read pick a simple book. The parent points to the words as he reads and the child reads at the same time or just a second behind the parent. If the child makes a mistake the parent says the correct word and moves on. Do this several times a day but only for about ten minutes at a time. (page3)

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Bonding In Children

Good bonding with positive parents, family members, friends, school and community can have a deep effect on the child and his development. When the groups goals are good and the child strives to fulfill these goals the child is less likely to develop problems during the adolescent years. Children will follow the crowd in many cases and so as a parent you want to be sure your child is following or being a part of a good crowd that will present good values. It is much easier for a child to say no to a bad behavior such as smoking or drinking if the people he or she values in their life expresses disapproval of these habits. The group offers support and sends the child a signal that he is doing the right thing. The group rewards this behavior by inviting the child to be part of the group. This is one reason it is so important for parents to know who their child is spending time with and what they are doing. If the people your child spends time with have habits you would rather your child not acquire then you as a parent need to help the child find healthier people to be in his life.

When trying to give your child good bonding opportunities there are three conditions necessary to the process. First the child must have an opportunity to form these relationships. The opportunities should allow the child an avenue to contribute to the family, friends, school and community. When a child participates in sports or a dance recital for instance, the child is learning responsibility when working with a group to achieve a goal. When a child helps with a school project such as raising money for a library book drive, he is extending his world by helping others as he helps himself. It is important for a child to reach out to other people. The world should not be about only himself. So when looking for groups for your child to find friends consider how he will be able to help the group improve. What outreaches will the child find with these people? Bonding is an active process, a process of give and take. When good bonding activities are provided, the child can feel responsible and significant. Perhaps as a child you painted scenery for the school play. Remember how good you felt as you told your parents, "I painted that tree". You were given a task to complete that was necessary for the group's endeavor to be successful, you were an important part of the play and you were successful. How many adults today feel oppressed at work because their ideas are never accepted or even listened to? How many employees feel that they do not make any useful contributions to the company? The feeling of inclusion into a group and the feeling of contributing are important no matter what age a person is, whether very young or very old or somewhere in between. Many of our difficulties as a society would be less if we knew how to work together while making each member feel that he or she was contributing. Strive to find ways that your child can contribute whether in the home, at school or in the community. It is never too young to start giving of oneself.

Find opportunities for your child to become involved with group activities. Provide outlets for your child to reach out and help other people. These opportunities do not all have to be long term commitments. Perhaps your community is having a clean up drive to pick up litter, do some gardening in the park or perhaps painting some houses for the elderly. Get involved with your child and both of you give of your time and talents. This is an excellent way for a child to learn to be part of something bigger than himself.

The second part of successful bonding for your child is to make sure he has the skills for the project. Of course just because a child is given the opportunity to help with a team, or a class or a community project does not mean that he can. You must make sure that the child has the necessary skills to complete



Bonding cont.

the project in which he is involved. If no one shows a child how to do a job he is unfamiliar with the project can lead to a sense of failure and frustration. Having your child help you with projects around the house can be a good starting point. Perhaps you are building a deck. Your child can help you by getting things for you. Teach your child what the tools are and how to use them safely. As the child is able, let him or her do more of the project. Of course when working with tools consider the age of the child. But even a young child can help you measure something. Remember to tell your child how much help he or she is being and what a good job he is doing. You might want to make some type of project whether sewing, building, cleaning, or learning a new hobby that is geared to teach your child some skills that the child will need later in life. Whenever possible just include your child in daily living and teach what you know. Sometimes this can be trying as any parent will tell you. It is usually faster and easier to just do the task yourself but think of the rewards for your child when they develop new skills they can share with others. And after all, at some point the child will become older and be able to wash the car or sweep the floor without your help. You earned the break.

So now you have given your child the opportunity and the skills to contribute next you want to make sure the child is recognized for his efforts. No one likes to work hard on a project and then not have anyone say good job or that was fantastic or we could not have done it without you. Recognizing the effort put forth by your child will encourage her to do even more next time. The child will experience a sense of accomplishment and pride. These are powerful deterrents against alcohol, drugs and other temptations of adolescent.

Reading cont.

Remember to praise your child. Do not focus on the mistakes.

Select different types of books to read to your child. Some can be fiction, others perhaps scientific and do not forget poems. You want your children to be exposed to different rhythms and types of words. Have some easy to read books that your child can read himself.

Let your child see that reading is all around him. Read labels in the grocery store or greeting cards, road signs and store signs. Point out words all around him or her.

Let your child see you read. Example is the best teacher.

And one last point, children are never too old to be read to. Even your teenager may enjoy Shakespeare more if you play one part and your teen plays another character.



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The Parents' Academy/Parents' Corner

The Parents' Academy and Parents' Corner is seeking sponsors. We would like to partner with organizations such as church groups or civic groups for upcoming programs.

If your group would like to schedule a presentation tailored to your needs, or sponsor a program please contact Debbie at 575-200-9962 or email to parentsacademy@co.eddy.nm.us to make arrangements.

If you would like to receive our monthly newsletter just send us an email and we will put you on our email list.