

## Creating a Reader-Friendly Home

A home filled with reading material is a good way to help kids become enthusiastic (and proficient) readers. What kind of books should you have? Ask your kids about their interests. If they're too young to have a preference, your local librarian can offer suggestions about age-appropriate books.

Here are some other tips:

**Keep a varied selection.** Collect board books or books with mirrors and different textures for babies. Older kids will enjoy variety: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry plus dictionaries and other reference books.

Kids can understand stories they might not be able to read on their own. If a more challenging book interests your child, make it something to read together. Younger kids can look at illustrations in books and ask questions as they follow along.

And don't limit reading material to books. Kids might also enjoy:

- magazines (for kids)
- audio books
- postcards from relatives
- photo albums or scrapbooks
- newspapers
- comic books
- the Internet

**Keep reading material handy.** Keep sturdy books with other toys for easy exploration. Books near the changing table and high chair can be helpful distractions for younger kids at appropriate moments. Plastic books can even go in the bathtub. Keep books next to comfy chairs and sofas where you cuddle up so you can read after feedings and naps.

**Create a special reading place.** As kids grow, keep age-appropriate books and magazines on shelves they can reach in their favorite hangouts around the house. Make these shelves appealing and keep them organized. Place some of the books with



Raising a reader doesn't have to break the bank! Use your local library to keep new reading material coming into the house. Visit used bookstores and trade books with other parents.

the covers facing out so they're easy to spot. Put a basket full of books and magazines next to their favorite places to sit. Create a cozy reading corner, and encourage kids to use it by setting up "reading corner time" each day.

**Keep it appealing.** Make sure reading areas have good lighting. Change the materials often — add seasonal books, rotate different magazines, and include books that relate to what kids are interested in or studying in school. Decorate the corner with your child's artwork or writing. Place a CD or tape player nearby for audio books.

**Encourage kids to create the reading.** Set up a writing and art center and encourage kids to make books, posters, or collages that they decorate with their own pictures and writing. Kids love to read things they've written themselves or to share their creations with family and friends.

### **Think About Atmosphere**

Other ways to encourage kids to read:

- Give your child quiet time every day to read or write.
- Limit time kids spend in front of a screen (including TV, computer, and video games) to help ensure that they have time for reading.
- Read together. Offer to read a book aloud, or ask your child to read to you from a favorite magazine. Make a habit of sitting together while you each read your own books, sharing quiet time together.

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Date reviewed: February 2007



Touching and even playing with books is an important way to encourage your child's relationship with them. Keep expensive, keepsake, or fragile books up on higher shelves to take down and read with your child and expect that the rest will get sticky, dirty, and dog-eared—in other words, well-loved!

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