

Fall 2024-25 Extra Special Newsletter for Extra Special Kids

In this issue, you will find some ways that parents and caregivers can help children with disabilities.

Reasons Why You Should Read Together as a Family

adapted from an article by MPL Karen

A family that reads together for 20 minutes a day, 7 days a week gets more than 121 hours of bonding time every year. This can have countless benefits, some of which are listed below:

Bonding with your kids with a dedicated family time: Many families face challenges with busy schedules with school, work, and extracurricular activities, but taking time, even just 20 minutes a day to sit together and read as a family can create bonds that will last forever.

Learning to read for pleasure and fostering a love for books: Kids, who see their parents read for pleasure, are more likely to read themselves and when the whole family gets involved, it strengthens the message that reading is not just for school or work but for fun as well.

Expanding vocabulary: The more you read the better your vocabulary will be regardless of age.

Creates opportunities to have conversations on various topics: It can be difficult to talk to your kids about tough subjects, but reading is a great way to introduce these kinds of topics to your family. This can foster discussion among everyone in the family, which is a great way to share feelings, opinions, and to learn together.

Exposure to new experiences: One of the best ways to learn about something new is through a story. Reading together will give your family a chance to experience new things in books that children may not have yet experienced in real life, giving the opportunity to ask questions and be more connected with each other.



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If we always helped one another, no one would need luck.
Sophocles



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Reasons Why You Should Read Together as a Family (continued)

A time to reduce screen/gadget time: Screen time is more prominent than ever, especially during work and school. Taking time to step away from screens and enjoying a good book together will give everyone time to relax and enjoy each other's company while giving both your eyes and your device a break.

Exercise your imagination together: Both kids and parents can use their imagination. We are all faced with real world issues every day. Why not take a break, grab a book and exercise your imagination muscle we all have inside of us? Go on an adventure as a family with a great book and give your mind a chance to explore all the possibilities.

A chance to do an activity together: Families do not always have to read fiction, there are some great non-fiction books with activities for the whole family like gardening, crafts, cooking, trivia, and outdoor activities that everyone can participate in.

Parents and kids of all ages will benefit from reading together. If this is not already a part of your family's routine you are encouraged to give it a try. Check out your local public library to find great books.

Remember, families that read together succeed together

Benefits of Reading for All Ages by MPL Karen

If you need a reminder of how important regular reading is for wellbeing and literacy, here are the top 10 benefits of reading for all ages:

Reading Exercises the Brain: While reading, we have to remember different characters and settings that belong to a given story. Even if you enjoy reading a book in one sitting, you have to remember the details throughout the time it takes to read the book. Therefore, reading is a workout for your brain that improves memory function.

Reading is a Form of (free) Entertainment: Did you know that most of the popular TV shows and movies are based on books? So why not indulge in the original form of entertainment by immersing yourself in reading. Most importantly, it is free at your local public library.

Reading Improves Concentration and the Ability to Focus

We can all agree that reading cannot happen without focus and in order to fully understand the story, we have to concentrate on each page that we read. In a world where gadgets are only getting faster and shortening our attention span, we need to constantly practice concentration and focus. Reading is one of the few activities that requires your undivided attention, therefore, improving your ability to concentrate.

Benefits of Reading for All Ages (continued)

Reading Improves Literacy

Books have the power to improve your vocabulary by introducing you to new words. The more you read, the more your vocabulary grows, along with your ability to effectively communicate. Additionally, reading improves writing skills by helping the reader understand and learn different writing styles.

Reading Improves Sleep

By creating a bedtime routine that includes reading, you can signal to your body that it is time to sleep. Now, more than ever, we rely on increased screen time to get through the day. Therefore, by setting your phone aside and picking up a book, you are telling your brain that it is time to quiet down. Moreover, since reading helps you de-stress, doing so right before bed helps calm your mind and anxiety and improves the quality of sleep.

Reading Increases General Knowledge

Books are always filled with fun and interesting facts. Whether you read fiction or non-fiction, books have the ability to provide us with information we would otherwise not have known. Reading a variety of topics can make you a more knowledgeable person, in turn improving your conversational skills.

Reading is Motivational

By reading books about protagonists who have overcome challenges, we are oftentimes encouraged to do the same. The right book can motivate you to never give up and stay positive.

Reading Reduces Stress

Reading has the power to transport you to another world and away from the monotonous daily routine. By doing so, reading can decrease stress, lower heart rate, and reduce blood pressure.

Reading Sets a Positive Example

Reading is a key component of early literacy development. You can set an example of just how crucial this is by modeling the behavior yourself. Children and young people are excellent at mimicking the adults around them which means that if you regularly set aside some “me time” for reading, your children and youth will learn to do the same.

Reading adds endless benefits to our daily lives, including stress-relief and entertainment.



Becoming Writers adapted Reading Rockets article

A child's writing development parallels the child's development as a reader.

"Reading is like breathing in, and writing is like breathing out." Pam Allyn, literacy advocate

"The primary goals of writing are to communicate, to persuade, to inform, to learn, to reflect about yourself, and also to entertain others. What really makes writing motivating for children and youth is sharing it and being successful with it." Steve Graham, Arizona State University

To Write Well, a Broad Set of Skills is Needed

Basic Writing Skills

These include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, handwriting or keyboarding, and sentence structure (for example, elimination of run-ons and sentence fragments). Basic writing skills are sometimes called the "mechanics" of writing.

Text Generation

Text generation means translating your thoughts and ideas into language – the "content" of writing. Text generation includes word choice (vocabulary), details that add meaning, and clear expression.

Writing Processes

Good writing involves planning, revising, and editing. These processes are extremely important to success in writing and become even more important throughout a child's schooling.

Writing Knowledge

Writing knowledge includes an understanding of types of writing (genre) – for example, understanding that narrative writing or descriptive writing is organized differently than informational writing or persuasive writing. Another important part of writing knowledge is understanding the audience you are writing for.



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