



Top Ten Tips On How To Improve Your Child's Reading & Writing

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#1 – Enthusiasm

Try to act excited about reading and writing. Even if you didn't enjoy reading or writing at school it's important that your child sees you being enthusiastic about these activities. Enthusiasm is infectious and you'll be amazed at how this simple technique will help your children feel motivated to read and write more often.

#2 – Success breeds success.

This idiom is so true when it comes to children doing well at school. Once children start to feel like they are doing well and making progress they automatically feel motivated to do more of the activity. So, ALWAYS make sure you praise your child's efforts when attempting to read or write. It's a known fact that it is far easier to criticise somebody than it is to find something positive to say, so your challenge is to always give positive feedback first BEFORE attempting to give ideas on how your child could do

better. Of course, try to omit any negative comments altogether - this is easier said than done!

#3 - Ownership

Try to allow your children to have as much ownership as possible. This will in turn make them far more enthusiastic and self-motivated. For example, ask your child what they are interested in and what sort of books they would be keen to read. Then take them to the shop or library and let them choose their own books, with your guidance. The same approach could also be taken, for example, with writing pens/paper. As a special treat allow your child to choose their own special writing pen or writing paper. Just like adults, children love to feel important. By allowing your child these simple privileges their self-esteem will rocket and also their enthusiasm for reading or writing.

#4 – Purpose

Your child will be far more motivated if their reading or writing has a purpose. For example, encourage your child to communicate with others via letters or email (e.g. thank you notes, invitations to a party, friends/relatives overseas, Christmas cards, Birthday cards etc). Before visiting a new place or before going on holiday you could try to get information on the town or the country, either from the library or from the internet, and then you could help your child to read all about it. Whilst on holiday you could encourage your child to write in a diary each day, so that

when you got home you could refer to the diary when writing a recount of your holiday, or when adding captions to your photos in a photo album or on a PowerPoint slideshow. These could then be shared with friends and relatives.

#5 – Audience

Try to have an audience in mind for your child's reading or writing. For example, tell your child that you are going to both read a special story to someone as a treat for them. The audience could be your partner, a relative or a friend. Explain to your child that before your performance you must both practise to make sure that the story sounds exciting and enjoyable. You could share the reading depending on your child's ability, for example, you could read alternate paragraphs or alternate pages, you could read the difficult words and your child could read the easier words. After practising and trying to encourage your child to read with expression, you could have the performance. You could even include props to make it more exciting, depending on the time available.

The same approach could be taken for writing. For example, tell your child that you are both going to try to write a short story for someone (as above). Again, you could share the workload depending on your child's ability. Once the short story is written your child could decide whether they want to just read the story to the audience or perhaps act it out with props etc. Most children love acting.

#6 – Competition

Encourage your child to enter fun competitions, where there is a clear purpose in mind. There are many online writing competitions available, for example, go to:

<http://KidsStoriesOnline.com>

Once you have found an interesting competition to enter share it with other parents and children. This way your child will discuss the competition with other children and this will create more motivation.

#7 – Regularity

The brain is like any other muscle in the body. It responds well to regular use and the ‘little and often’ approach is far better than the ‘all or nothing’ approach. What this means is that it is far more beneficial for your child to read or write four to five times a week, (e.g. for 20 to 45 minute periods) than it is for him/her to do one long marathon session each week.

#8 – Routine

Children, just like adults, are creatures of habit! Therefore, if possible, try to have set times each week for reading and writing activities. Also, try to create a special place in your home where your child can settle and enjoy

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his/her activities. Try to use the 'Ownership' idea from tip #3 above. For example, involve your child in creating a cosy, comfortable area in your home where they will want to retreat to. This way, instead of having to 'nag' your child to read or write, they will be motivated to do this activity because they helped build the retreat area and they enjoy being in that place.

#9 – Show Respect & Support To Your Child's Teacher & School

Whether you respect your child's teacher or not is irrelevant, but it is extremely important for the sake of your child's progress that you show respect to your child's teacher, especially in front of your child. If you, as a parent/carer, do not show respect then your child will not respect his/her teacher, and then it will be far harder for your child to learn from him/her.

Whether you think your child's teacher is fabulous or sub-standard, there is always something that your child can learn from that teacher. Finally, remember, the job of a teacher is far, far harder than it may seem from the outside looking in!

#10 – Try to have as much fun as possible!

If your child is laughing and having fun during an activity then that is half the battle. It means they are far more likely to want to do the activity again and again, and are therefore more likely to become self-motivated. The best way to make reading or writing activities more fun is to introduce some movement (e.g. hand actions), or better still some acting with props. Most children love to have a go at acting out stories, since this is fun and also gives them a huge amount of ownership. It is also something which they usually find quite easy, since they have more than likely been play acting since quite a young age.

One way of performing the above activity is to first read a short story, either you reading to your child, your child reading to you, or both you and your child reading together, depending on your child's level of ability. After reading through the story once have a short discussion about what happened, and what each character was like. Then read the story once more. Depending on whether it is just you and your child present, or whether there are other children or adults available, you can decide who is going to play which character. If it is only the two of you then you could just act out a short scene between two characters, or you could each play two different characters and chop and change between the two.

The most important point to remember is that it doesn't need to be perfect, but **it does need to be fun!** You will probably be amazed at how much fun

you have yourself! Time permitting, you can also add some simple props for effect – children love that part the most. It makes a wonderful change from the TV or from computer games.



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- Ask questions about reading and writing
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- Join a specific group depending on the age of your child and whether you are a parent or a teacher
- Share files, photos and videos about children's reading & writing ideas or resources
- Be kept informed of writing competitions and FREE offers
- Access FREE bedtime story videos

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