

MAKING TIME FOR READING TOGETHER

We have many demands on our time. We have to get the groceries and prepare the meals. We have to be sure the laundry is washed and the homework is done. It can be hard to find time to read with a child. We want to, but so many things demand our attention.

Reading with a child is a gift we give both to ourselves and to the child. Children who are familiar with books and like to read are prepared to succeed in school and to entertain themselves. Adults who read with a child are building shared memories along with reading skills.

But where can we find the time? We might think that a “perfect” parent makes time every night to read with their child for twenty minutes before bedtime. In reality we sometimes have to get creative to make a time for reading that fits into our busy schedules. Here are some ideas:

- Is there an older child who plays a sport? Do you find it challenging to keep a younger child entertained while you wait in the bleachers? Maybe “waiting time” becomes that special “reading time.”
- Do you ride the bus together in the morning? Start the day together with a story. Driving? Maybe a book-on-tape becomes a treat you both can look forward to.
- Do you have two or more children to guide through bedtime routines? Although they might not admit it, an older child might enjoy listening to a picture book along with the younger child. And a younger child might enjoy listening to a chapter book picked out by the older child as you read it to both of them. Maybe they both get to read a picture book to you. Children’s listening skills are stronger than their reading skills until about eighth grade, so continue to read aloud.
- Are you all early birds? Maybe breakfast time is story time.
- Maybe every other Tuesday afternoon is when you schedule a visit to the library. New books can add excitement to read-aloud time.

Whatever time you decide on, try to make it predictable. Children look forward to story time with you. Make a promise to yourself to put reading time near the top of your list of important things to do. Remember, you are not only raising a kid who reads, you are raising a reader who will remember to make read-aloud time a priority when they grow up and have children of their own.

This tip sheet is being brought to you by the YMCA. YMCAs across Canada serve over 500,000 children in various programs. YMCA Canada is a member of the Abundant Assets Alliance, a partnership of YMCA Canada, the YMCA of the USA and Search Institute, working together to help young people obtain the 40 developmental assets that they need in order to thrive. To learn more about the developmental assets and how you can help your child build these assets, visit www.abundantassets.org.

One of the developmental assets that helps young people thrive is “Reading for Pleasure.” This series of tip sheets and the resource, *Raising Kids Who Read*, created by YMCA Canada, helps adults build this asset with the young people in their lives. To download copies of any of these resources, go to http://www.ymca.ca/eng_ycdaresources.htm#Res6.



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strong families, strong communities.