

# Activity: Fun Ways to Create a Love of Reading



By Joanna Nesbit

Cultivating solid reading routines from early on will benefit youngsters for the rest of their lives. Keep it light and fun and they won't even realize they're learning. Here's how to make books a family habit.

- **Establish independent reading time.** Even when kids are very young, they can handle "quiet reading time." Hang out with your child while each of you reads — or looks at — your own book. While you're modeling pleasure reading for your child, your child is developing independent reading habits. If your child wants to talk about his book, put yours down and ask questions and then model going back to your own reading.

- **Schedule family reading time.** Establish a family read-aloud time for everyone to gather in one place and listen to a selected book. Start the habit early and kids will come to expect it. As kids get older and busier, try to keep the routine alive on weekends, road trips and camping trips.

- **Take turns reading.** Pick a book to share reading aloud with your child and alternate pages or passages. For extra laughs, try using funny voices for dialogue. Hearing you read, then practicing herself, will help your child learn how sentence patterns should sound.

- **Try poetry.** It's easy to forget about poetry, but it can be a fun genre for kids. Shel Silverstein's silly verses are favorites for many, or try a child's anthology to introduce multiple well-known poets. Who knows? Your kids may be inspired to pen their own verses.

- **Listen to audiobooks.** When my kids were young, our family's favorite way to pass the time in the car was to listen to audiobooks from the library. Find a well-loved series or narrator, and have kids turn off electronics while they listen to the story.

- **Read and watch.** Choose a book that has been made into a movie and compare the two. Read the book aloud first, and then rent the movie for family movie night and discuss what's different between the two and why, and what people thought of it.

- **Host a family book club.** Obtain multiple copies of a book to read simultaneously, and share opinions as you read. Aim for reading several books in a year and, if your kids will go for it, choose books they might not read on their own, such as *The Call of the Wild* or *The Yearling*.

- **Read each other's books.** Share recommendations for books with your kids, and read those that they recommend to you, then discuss them afterward. Kids love it when you value their intellect and choice of reading material. Plus, you'll get to know your child better.

- **Keep a family book journal.** Keep a list of the books that everyone has read. Write down the title, author, date and thoughts about the book. It's a great way to keep a record and it prompts your kids to think about the book after "The End."

*Joanna Nesbit is a Pacific Northwest freelance writer who writes about parenting, family, travel or any combination of these topics. Her articles and essays have appeared in parent, custom and online publications.*