

Reading Tips for Parents of Middle School Students

As your child's first and most important teacher, you can be a powerful force in your child's efforts to become a skillful reader. Whether your child is already a proficient reader, or is a struggling or reluctant reader, your positive encouragement can help them make continuous strides toward success. Here are some suggestions on how you can support reading at home.



-  Create a quiet, special place in your home for your child to read. Keep books and reading materials readily available.
-  Help your child see that reading is important. Set a good example for your child by reading books, newspapers, and magazines. Talk about what you are reading.
-  Join the Trask Grizzly Family Book Club. The club meets once a month and provides families with dinner and one book to read together. Club meetings include activities related to each novel.
-  Be attentive to your child's interests and developing skills. Remember to be somewhat non-judgmental about the text your child chooses: cartoons, instructions for video games, fantasy, sports, or fashion magazines can be the key to unlocking a lifetime of reading pleasure.
-  Allow your child to subscribe to magazines based on his/her interests to encourage frequent reading.
-  Read and discuss newspaper and magazine articles. An article beside the breakfast bowl can provide a great alternative to the usual, routine conversations!
-  Visit bookstores, public and school libraries regularly to find materials for pleasure reading.
-  Turn the television off at least once a week and read as a family. Discuss what everyone is reading.
-  Remind your child that sometimes adults have "homework" to do as well (i.e. reading reports, doing performance appraisals, research, etc.). This will allow your child to see the connection of reading to real life.
-  Create a family "word wall" on a bulletin board or the refrigerator. Share new words you came across in your reading and what they mean.
-  Encourage your child to read for 15 minutes before going to sleep each night.
-  Take reading materials with you on outings. Encourage your child to read while riding in the car, waiting at the doctor's office, passing time between activities.
-  If your child has an assigned reading, try to read the same book so you can have meaningful discussions about the story. If your child is struggling to complete an assigned reading, try taking turns listening to him/her read, and reading aloud to your child, checking frequently for understanding.

-  Ask your child about reading strategies he/she has learned at school. Have your child use these strategies when reading at home.
-  Encourage your child to re-read material to get a deeper understanding of its contents. This is particularly true for non-fiction material (textbook content) and material written above grade level.
-  Discuss the importance and approach of reading for different purposes: to entertain, to inform, to persuade, etc. Reading for different purposes helps to define the speed and depth of understanding to apply to that reading.
-  Distinguish between skimming, scanning, speed reading, and reading for deep understanding. Help your child to understand the appropriate applications of each.
-  Encourage “engagement strategies” such as highlighting, using post-it notes, underlining, and developing questions as your child reads. These behaviors help to habitualize the process of making-meaning and to ensure your child is doing more than reading the words on the page. Although your child should never mark in a library or school textbook, cutting post-it notes into smaller “flags” can serve a similar purpose.
-  Write notes recognizing your child’s accomplishments. A little praise can go a long way!
-  Reward progress with a trip to the bookstore to select a special book.
-  Consider purchasing an electronic reader (i.e. Kindle, Nook, etc.). E-readers have become very popular and may entice your child to read more often.
-  Emphasize the importance of reading as a life-long habit and encourage its frequent practice.

Helpful Web Sites:

-  Lexile Reading Measures: <http://www.lexile.com/>
-  New Hanover County Public Library:
<http://www.nhcgov.com/library/pages/default.aspx>
-  Scholastic: <http://www.scholastic.com/home/>



Questions? Contact Liz Rappold, Literacy Coach, at Elizabeth.Rappold@nhcs.net

Adapted from:

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