

Reading Age 14 Summary

Why Reading?

Becoming intentional about a daily reading routine, looking for ways to incorporate reading into family time spent together, and considering the quality of the experience of reading together can all contribute to a child's/teen's development.

STEP

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Get Your Child/Teen Thinking by Getting Their Input

- Get curious about the books your child/teen is reading at school. They may be reading books you remember. Engage them in a discussion about the books they are reading.
- Discuss with your child/teen the differences between reading a book and watching a movie. Talk about which option allows for more creativity and self-expression.
- Allow your child/teen some choices when establishing a reading routine. Allowing choices will add to their sense of control and motivation to read. Questions you could ask to better understand their preferences include:
 - *“How much reading homework do you usually get from school every day?”*
 - *“Considering all of the activities that typically take place after school, when is the best time to read?”*
- Create a space that can consistently be used for reading time. Although reading can take place anytime and anywhere, having a designated place ensures there is a well-lit, quiet, and comfortable spot. The goal of your reading space is to provide a well-equipped, consistent place for your child/teen to fully focus on a story. Setting up a reading nook can be highly motivating to a child/teen and may encourage more of their own time spent on reading.
- Approach reading time as a treat, not a chore. If you save reading for after things like doing homework or getting ready for bed, then reading can be viewed as a desirable time to be together.
- Follow your child's/teen's interests. At school, they are asked to engage in reading that may not be of interest to them. It is okay if your child/teen only wants to read graphic novels for fun. Listening to audible books can also be a fun way to incorporate reading with a child/teen who shows little interest in picking up a book. Listening to a book together on a long car ride can be a great way to share in a reading experience.
- Consider removing easy technology distractions at least an hour before bedtime and incorporating reading into your child's/teen's wind-down routine. Transitioning from the excited brain activity of technology to sleep can be difficult. Reading can be an excellent transition.

Tip: Make it fun! Designing a reading spot together can be an enjoyable experience. Allow your child/teen to pick out their own pillows, bean bag chairs, or bookmarks.

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Teach New Skills

- Listen with interest when your child/teen invites you to learn more about what they are reading or asks a question. Try to relate any themes to their life. You can also ask questions such as:
 - *“What captures your interest when you start reading a book?”*
 - *“Which character do you identify with the most?”*
 - *“What are some themes in the book that are similar or different to how you live?”*
- Share your curiosity and interest in the subject, but do not provide an answer.
- Model reading. Remember, your child/teen is watching you and will notice if you do or do not read around your home. Allow your child/teen to pick a book for you or read a book they have read and bring it into your conversations.
- Research information together in books. Talk about the difference between online research and looking up something in a book. Although it’s tempting to do all of your research about a topic online, be sure to include books or articles in your research process. If your child/teen is doing a science project on geology, internet research can be helpful. But, be sure to also seek out books that can provide helpful background information. This cultivates a habit of seeking out the information they require through books.
- Encourage your child/teen to take “brain breaks” while they are reading to allow them to process what they have read. They can take a break to walk around, play with the dog, or do a chore. You could also share how you take brain breaks at work and strategies that have worked for you.
- Follow your child’s/teen’s lead on books. Take a trip to the library and see what they select. Give them the choice of which books to read.

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Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits

- Use “I’d love to hear...” as a way to get your child/teen talking about what they are reading. This might sound like, *“I remember reading this book. I’d love to hear what it’s about?”*
- Recognize any effort your child/teen makes either reading or sharing with you what they are reading. Say, *“I so appreciate hearing about the book through your lens because you have such an interesting way of looking at things.”*
- Proactively remind your child/teen to help them be successful. This might sound like, *“I am looking forward to hearing about the latest in the book that you are reading.”*

Trap: Resist the temptation to repeat yourself. Children/Teens often need more time to perform tasks that challenge them even if you believe they are simple and don't require much time. If you constantly remind them about reading, they will resist. Your waiting could make the difference in whether they are able to do what you need them to do.

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Support Your Child's/Teen's Development and Success

- Promote a learning attitude. Be curious about your child/teen and what they are learning. The more you model curiosity, the more they will engage in books as well as in the world around them.
- Talk positively about reading and share your interest in reading. Talk with your child/teen about your favorite books and what makes you feel connected with the characters.
- Coach your child/teen to get more support if needed. Encourage them to talk with their teachers to get book recommendations or alternatives. Hold firm to the belief that if your child/teen doesn't like reading, it is because they haven't found the subjects that captivate them.
- Stay engaged. Read with your child/teen and discuss books regularly. Make a plan to read a particular book that also has a movie and watch and compare the movie after reading the book.

Tip: Become aware of your own reactions to reading. Make sure that your tone and attitude are one of enjoyment, curiosity, and learning.

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Recognize Efforts

- Recognize and call out when things are going well. It may seem obvious, but it's easy not to notice when everything is moving along smoothly. Noticing and naming the behavior provides the necessary reinforcement that you see and value your child's/teen's choice. For example, when children/teens complete their homework on time, a short, specific call out is all that's needed: *"I really enjoy hearing about what you are reading. It's like I am reading it through an entirely different lens."*
- Recognize small steps along the way. Don't wait for significant accomplishments—like the full bedtime routine going smoothly—to recognize effort. Remember that your recognition can work as a tool to promote more positive behaviors. Find small ways your child/teen is making an effort and let them know you see them.

Trap: It can be easy to resort to bribes when recognition and occasional rewards are underutilized. If parents or those in a parenting role frequently resort to bribes, it is likely time to revisit the five-step process.

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