

# PRINCIPALS' DIGESTS

30 Palliser Drive • Hamilton • NZ 3210 • Tel 07 855 7101

digests@xtra.co.nz • www.principalsdigests.co.nz

Digests may be copied and distributed in the school community of the subscriber.

Newsletter

Volume 23 Number 44

## READING ALOUD TO YOUR CHILDREN IS IMPORTANT

One of the most important things parents can do is to read with them. That means starting when they are new-borns and continuing well beyond the years that they can read by themselves. Study after study shows that early reading with children helps them learn to speak, interact, bond with parents and read early themselves, and reading with kids who already know how to read helps them feel close to caretakers, understand the world around them and be empathetic citizens of the world.



**It's so important to start reading from Day One.** The sound of your voice, the lyrical quality of younger books, the poetry of language, are magical and even at 8 weeks old they can focus. As children begin to grow, make sure books are available everywhere in the home and keep reading to them even when they begin to read on their own. As they become independent readers, even kids in older age groups love nothing more than that time with their parents. Many children say the most special time they recall spending with a parent is reading together.

**Make reading fun and be playful.** Use the opportunity to ham it up and perhaps create different character voices to really engage the child. Don't be shy about not perfecting the read aloud — especially with little ones. Don't feel discouraged if a younger child gets distracted or interrupts story time with questions.

That's all part of the learning journey and reading process.

**Be a resource to your kids for book ideas — even if they don't ask — especially for infrequent readers.** Scholastic's research shows that parents underestimate that kids need help finding books. Research shows kids of all ages want books that "make me laugh." Parents can also get in on the fun with silly books.

**Add books to your home library that showcase diverse story lines and characters.** Look for stories that showcase different experiences, backgrounds, religions, identities and more to help your children find themselves in books — as well as learn about other people's lives. This will teach children the importance of empathy and kindness.



**Teachers, school librarians and friends and family will all be able to give you book suggestions.** Ask your teacher what books help even the most reluctant reader stay engaged. Librarians always have their finger on what is the most popular with every age group and visits to the library are a special part of family life.

**Choice rules when kids read for fun.** Most children say their favourite books are the ones that they have picked out themselves. Even from an early age, children will have their favourites and want the same books read over and over again. Remember that book series are a great way to get kids hooked on story lines and characters.

**Make books accessible.** Make your bookshelves are low enough for kids to reach the book that they want to read. Keep books by your children's bedside and all over the house. Bring books with you on car trips and to wherever there is likely to be some waiting time. Rather than handing them a device, hand them a book they love. The more accessible you make books, the more you'll see their reading frequency grow. Always give a book or book token for birthdays and Christmas so books become part of the fun and pleasure of opening a parcel.

**Children's choices will change day to day and month to month, so be open and ready to grow and change along with your budding lifelong reader.**

Acknowledgement: Scholastic's Kids & Family Reading Report.