

### Grab A Book – not the remote!

I know the weather is supposed to be stellar this weekend, but that doesn't mean it will be like that for very long. As a result we are often anchored to the warmth of our homes as we see the effects of cold weather, wind, and snow blow around outside. A great alternative to clutching the remote and plopping down in front of the TV is to grab a book and curl up with a warm blanket.

Adults and children alike benefit greatly from making time for reading in their daily lives. 1) They read better, write better and maintain a higher level of concentration. 2) It keeps the mind sharp and helps them process new information more quickly. 3) Children will have a better chance for a more fulfilling adult life if they have established good reading patterns and skills. 4) Reading expands interest areas and makes individuals more curious about learning more. 5) Reading is a fundamental skill needed to function more successfully at home and in the workplace. We can plant the seeds of interest in reading at a young age. Parents, grandparents, and caregivers can all contribute to planting these seeds in children.

It is very important that children have a good start with reading from an early age and have opportunities to practice reading. To do well in school, children need to be good readers. Schools shouldn't and can't take on this responsibility all by themselves. Family members have an important role to play. Reading with children helps them to do better in school and promotes success throughout life.

Most of us know how to read *to* a child and that's important, but it is important to go one step further and learn how to read *with* a child. Children who are learning to read need lots of opportunities to practice, and they need people to read *with* them. You can be a child's reading partner. Reading with a child is called "shared reading" because both you and the child are participating in the reading experience. It doesn't take a lot of time, it's easy to do, and both you and the child will likely experience greater satisfaction and enjoyment.

What are some of the things you need to think about to make this shared reading time both fun and effective?

- Child-centered – Set aside time where you can focus on the child alone, without distractions.
- Sensitive and respectful – If the child doesn't like a particular book or seems uncomfortable with it, then switch to another book.
- Realistic – Don't expect too much too soon.
- Enthusiastic – When you share your love of reading with a child, your enthusiasm is contagious.

- Encouraging – Help the child recognize even small successes.
- Commitment – Let the child know that shared reading is very important to you and then do it regularly.

## Shared Reading Strategies

It is important to have fun and easy shared reading strategies that you can use with the child. This list starts with strategies for younger, inexperienced readers and works toward independent solo reading:

- **Picture Reading** – Ask questions about the pictures or have the child tell a story just by looking at the pictures. Books with lots of pictures such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* are good for this strategy.
- **Sighting** – Before reading a page or passage, ask the child to find punctuation marks, certain words, specific letters, or the smallest or largest word.
- **Discovery Reading** – Guide the child through a familiar book, such as *Old MacDonald*, with the child filling in repeated phrases.
- **Echo Reading** - Read a passage and have the child read it back to you.
- **Unison Reading** – Both you and the child read the same passage aloud at the same time.
- **Whisper Reading** – Read very quietly into your child’s ear while the child reads aloud.
- **Stop and Go Reading** – You and the child take turns reading, and the child chooses a signal to show that it’s time to switch.
- **Solo Reading** – the child reads completely independently to you.

Here are some additional suggestions to help the child become a better reader:

- Simply talk with the child.
- Read *to* and *with* the child.
- Help the child read *solo*.
- Actually create books that include art work and writing with the child.
- Have lots of books available.
- Let the child see YOU reading.
- Most importantly, **MAKE READING FUN.**

Source: “How to Read With Your Grandchild”: [www.eXtension.org](http://www.eXtension.org)

Our local public library, the Dorothy Bramlage Library has a wonderful collection of books that will interest young and seasoned readers, alike. They can offer some suggestions on what books would interest all ages. Additionally, you are welcome to call me at the Geary County Extension office for additional ideas about reading to children and helping expand their interest and curiosity through reading. I would be happy to share some book titles that I have enjoyed reading to my kids and for myself, as well. Until next time – keep living resourcefully!