



## **5 Simple Steps To Develop Your Child's Love of Reading**

by Jennifer Benedict Medina, Ed.D.

1. Read, read, read with your child...even after they become independent readers.

“A child’s desire to learn to read comes from being read to” – Diane Frankenstein

When children are small, pull them up on your lap to read. Begin by looking through the pages to discuss the pictures/illustrations. While reading, ask questions about the events in the story. Choose a new word from the story and explain the meaning.

Continue to read to your child even after he/she learns to read independently. Take turns reading or simply read to your child. It is important that you allow your child to choose the books. The goal is to get your child interested in books and ultimately reading. Never believe that your kids are too old to enjoy reading with a parent or significant adult. This special time together will help your child develop a love of reading.

2. Visit the library OFTEN.

Visits to the library serve to help your child discover the joy one can find in books. Librarians are an incredible resource. Once the librarians know your child’s area of interest and reading level, they will direct you to multiple sources in fiction and non-fiction. Libraries often have free children’s programs that make visits to the library very exciting.

3. Reading is meant to be fun!

If you don’t know your child’s reading level, ask the teacher. Although you want to encourage your child to read at their level for school assignments, give your child some freedom at home and at the library. Sometimes kids choose books that they have read in the past and are easy to read. That’s okay, repetition is how children learn vocabulary, develop language and learn comprehension and fluency. If your child chooses books above his/her level, read the book to them. This will further your child’s understanding of complex storylines, characters, and higher-level vocabulary.

4. Encourage your child to save money for books and create a special place for books in your house.

Encourage your child to save money for books. Books can be purchased very inexpensively from garage sales and second-hand stores. There are many Little Free Libraries that offer free books–“take a book and leave a book.” Go to [LittleFreeLibrary.org](http://LittleFreeLibrary.org) and click on map to find a Little Free Library near you.



Have your child take part in creating a place for books in your home. Paint a small shelf or even a box to keep the books that your child owns. This shows children that books are special, need to be cared for and are meant to read more than once. Find a box to store the books from the library so they don't get mixed up with books from home.

5. Start a book club with friends!

If you want to make reading really fun, gather friends together to share and enjoy books. Your young child can invite friends over to listen to a book read by a parent. Older children can meet monthly with friends to discuss chapter books. Each month the book club can be at a different home, park or library. If possible, provide a snack to make it even more enticing. It's like creating a celebration around a book!

For more book club ideas go to [InTheLemonTree.com](http://InTheLemonTree.com)

**Reflection Questions:**

1. How many times a week do you currently read with your child? If you don't read with your child often, is there a time you can set aside to read together?
2. What does your child like to read about? If you are unsure, take them to the library and let them explore to find out.
3. Does your child have a special place for books in your home? If not, find a shelf or a box that your child can decorate to create a special place for books.
4. Do you know your child's reading level? If not, ask his/her teacher.