

Making the Most of Family Read-Alouds

Reading together is one of the simplest, most powerful ways to build connection, spark curiosity, and nurture a lifelong love of books. It's not just for littles either—older kids enjoy them, too. Here are a few ways to enhance your family read-alouds.

Keep It Short & Sweet

Even 10 minutes a day makes a difference. The consistency matters more than the length.

Read What They Love

Stories are great, but so are audiobooks, graphic novels, cookbooks, magazines, and wordless picture books. Text means any kind of reading material. If it sparks interest and builds connection, it counts.

Read Anywhere

Waiting rooms, sports practices, grocery pickup—you don't need a cozy chair at home to enjoy a read-aloud. Keep a book or basket in the car or your bag so you're always ready to grab a few minutes together.

Listening Counts

Car rides, chores, or downtime are perfect for audiobooks and podcasts.

Make It a Ritual

Turn reading into a tradition. Try "Story Sundays," "Bedtime Book Baskets," or another family habit that makes reading something to look forward to.

Don't Stress the Rules

It's okay to skip pages, reread the same book every night, or even miss a day. The goal isn't perfection—it's connection.

Set the Stage

Before reading, take a quick look together at the cover, blurb, headings, and any illustrations. Build excitement and curiosity by asking things such as:

- What do you think will happen?
- What do you expect to learn?
- What words should we keep an eye out for?

Talk While You Read

Pause to share ideas and reactions, the same way you might while watching a TV show together. Ask questions, wonder aloud, and invite your child's thoughts. Some examples:

- What might happen next?
- How is the character feeling? What advice would you give them?
- What would you do in this situation?

Reading Reflections

After finishing, take a moment to reflect together. This keeps the conversation going and deepens your child's thinking. Try asking:

- What was your favorite part?
- Would you recommend this book? Why or why not?
- What did you like best—or least?
- What would you ask the author?

Finding & Accessing Books

You don't have to spend a lot—or anything at all—to keep fresh reads in your family's hands. Here are some great options:

Buy (New or Discounted)

- [Scholastic](#) / [Scholastic Book Clubs](#): Popular titles, often linked to school programs
- [ThriftBooks](#) / [Better World Books](#) / [Book Outlet](#) / [AbeBooks](#): Affordable used or discounted books online

Borrow (Free with a Library Card)

- [Public Libraries](#): Print books, audiobooks, and ebooks. Many libraries also host reading challenges and family events
- [Libby \(by OverDrive\)](#): Borrow digital ebooks and audiobooks right from your phone or tablet

Access Free Digital Collections

- [Epic!](#): Free with limited access (full access by subscription)
- [Project Gutenberg](#): Thousands of classics in the public domain
- [Open Library](#): Digitized titles you can "check out" online
- [Manybooks](#) / [Free-eBooks.net](#) / [BookBub](#) / [Smashwords](#) / [Wattpad](#): Mix of classics, contemporary, and indie reads

Explore Digital Story Sources for Kids

- [International Children's Digital Library](#): Multilingual collection of children's books
- [Unite for Literacy](#): Early learning ebooks with narration in 40+ languages
- [Library For All](#): Stories designed for global access
- [Global Storybooks Portal](#): Illustrated stories from around the world
- [WorldStories](#): Traditional and modern tales you can read or listen to
- [Storyline Online](#): Actors reading picture books aloud
- [MagicBlox](#) / [Bilingual Picture Books](#) / [Novel Effect App](#): Interactive or multilingual experiences

Learn More

For more ideas and research on the value of reading aloud, see ILA's brief, [The Power and Promise of Read-Alouds and Independent Reading](#). You'll also find additional family-friendly activities and resources in ILA's [Literacy Month Toolkit](#).