



7 ways to get your child to love reading in 7 days



Readingmate

A habit of endless possibilities

www.readingmate.co.uk

Why should your child love to read?

Reading is a gift. For so many years in this country the ability to read and write was a privilege only the rich could afford. **Now, every single child, your child, has the right to go to school and learn to read.** We don't think that's enough.

Learning to read gets your child through the door but it won't have them hungry for more. If your child loves reading (as in, they choose a book over an iPad and they seek the comfort of pages rather than swipes) they will seek out a book independently.

They'll be inquisitive, critical and (most importantly) confident. **Research suggests that your child's future prospects could be greater and their mental health and well-being more stable if they're a keen reader.**



What are the impacts of reading for your child?

Reading is one of the few activities your child can do on their own. **It's free and there's no threat of over-indulgence or the possibility they turn into a technology-addicted gremlin.**

An Oxford study found that **reading is the only out-of-school activity for 16-year-olds that is linked to getting a managerial or professional job in later life, (May, 2011).**

Additionally, there's evidence to suggest that **reading for pleasure has more impact on how well your child does at school than their social or economic background.** Learning to read is about so much more than working out print.

It's about speaking, listening and understanding the world around them. **Reading with your child from a young age exposes them to a wide and rich vocabulary.**

Doing this regularly allows your child to **master the art of listening as well as understanding the format of stories and sounds of words.**

Being a confident and independent reader is an invaluable skill set for your child. It builds a firm foundation for literacy skills and promotes a curious mind and imagination.

Nurturing a love of reading in your child early sets them up for success both at school and later in life.

Why you shouldn't wait until they start school.

In the UK, on average, most children start school at age 5. **By this age, your child should:**

- **Enjoy being read to** and can understand the purpose and place of books
- Like to **retell simple stories** and ask questions about books.

There are of course some exceptions. If your child has an SEN for example, that's when you need more support from medical professionals and schools to achieve this.

Introducing your child to books from as early as possible gives them the best possible chance of falling in love with reading.



"Reading for pleasure enhances empathy, understanding of the self, and the ability to understand one's own and others' identities."
(The Reading Agency, 2015)

What are the benefits of reading for babies and young children?

Reading and sharing stories with babies can:

- Develop early literacy skills — such as understanding words, sounds and language development.
- **Stimulate their curiosity and promote imagination.**
- Help your babies' brain to form social skills early.
- Develop communication skills.
- Teach your child to **learn to value books and reading from an early age.**
- Aid your child to learn the difference between what is 'make-believe' and what is 'real.'
- Provide emotional support — **reading can help your child understand and react to change. This includes new or frightening events.**



It's more than reading.

It's not just about reading. **Your little one will learn just by watching you.**

As a parent, you set the standards of what's normal for your child. It's these behaviours that your child will eventually copy on their own.

By observing your behaviour, **they learn skills such as the correct way to hold a book or how to turn pages gently.**

Even simply looking at books with your child, provides them with non-verbal language to begin their reading journey.

Sharing stories and reading to your child also creates precious time to nurture your bond.



***"The more that you
read, the more
things you will know.
The more that you
learn, the more
places you'll go."
- Dr. Seuss***

Okay, I've done everything I should but **STILL** my child does not want to read!

So, you read to them when they were in the womb, bought all the sensory books as a baby, played with letters and phonics as a toddler, made books constantly available but they just don't want to read.

Sound familiar?

Don't panic.

We're here to help.

Follow these steps and your child will be heading for that bookshelf (without being asked) in just 7 days...



Day 1

Create a Reading Nook

Before you start trawling through Pinterest, sit down with your child and **ask them where they feel most comfortable in the house.**

Don't be disheartened if they say their bedroom (especially if this is an older child). Remember: **this is about where they feel most comfortable**, not where you think you need an extra sofa!

Fill this area with furnishings that will make them want to spend time there. But you don't need to spend fortunes. **Seek out soft furnishings from second-hand shops or buy some bean bags from E-Bay.** (my classroom is full of them and the students love them!)

One thing **I would definitely suggest is keeping this area a technology free zone.** That way there's no distractions or temptations.

The calmer the area is, the more likely your child's going to spend time there.

Make sure your child is involved in the whole of this process. It may disrupt the feng shui in your living room but if **that's the price you've got to pay to get your child excited to read**, I'd say it's pretty reasonable.



"Books build a stairway to your imagination."
- Stifyn Emrys



Day 2

Let Your Child Choose What to Read

Recommendations from friends and family members aside, **would you be happy if someone else told you what to read?**

Probably not.

Discuss with your child what their interests are (if you don't know them already), **do a bit of research and see what's available.**

Even better, pop down to your local library and ask them. **Librarians truly have the greatest and most encyclopaedic minds. So, if you're lucky enough to have one near you, use them!**

You may find that your child is more interested in non-fiction, graphic novels or comics. That's fine. They all still count as reading! **Get them to choose the material and you'll get them on board.**



"There's no such thing as a kid who hates reading. There are kids who love reading, and kids who are reading the wrong books."
- James Patterson



Day 3

Focus on Experience Over Time

Now you've got your area and your book, suggest to your child that at some point in each day, you'd like them to spend time with a book in their reading area.

They're still the child and this is still a new habit. **Reminders and gentle guidance will be needed to get them to take their first steps.**

Whether it's 10 minutes of flicking through the pages of the Guinness World Book of Records or 30 minutes plunged deep into Harry Potter, it really does not matter.

Reading is time spent with books. What's important is that your child has enjoyed the experience.

As long as they're relaxed and calm, they'll go back the next day (maybe for even longer).



"Reading brings us unknown friends."
- Honoré de Balzac



Day 4

Make Conversation

Discussing what your child's reading is where much of their comprehension and understanding will come from.

I'm not saying you should leap on them the second they close the book. But maybe **ask some questions over dinner about one thing they learned** or what's happened since you last spoke.

This keeps the reading material fresh in their mind and also allows them to develop their thinking about the text itself.



"The reading of all good books is like conversation with the finest (people) of the past centuries."

- Descartes



Day 5

Paired Reading / Modelled Reading

If you find they're struggling with the book, why not join them and take it in turns to read passages of the text?

Understanding how texts are formed and words are supposed to sound is really hard and takes a lot of practice. (I'm still learning now!)

By modelling parts for them your child will gain a greater understanding of pronunciation and sound blending. It's also a nice experience for them to listen as well as read.

The experience will feel like a reward and less of a chore. If you feel your child's struggling because they've chosen the wrong book (we've all been there), try and seek out something else.

Life's too short to read books you're not enjoying (and to not eat the cake).



"Your child seeing you read will be an instant incentive. Model the behaviour you want to see."

- Readingmate



Day 6

Encourage Independence

I know I've just suggested pairing up but **ensure there are periods when your child is reading alone and *choosing* to read on their own.**

This way they're more likely to learn the habit of picking up a book independently.

In the future this will lead to them picking up a book in their spare time and from free will.

It can be hard to take a step back. But I promise **once the stabilisers are off, they'll flourish.**



"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it."

- Oscar Wilde



Day 7

Praise, Praise and Praise Again (but don't overdo it)

Regardless of age, we all love to be praised for our hard work, don't we?

I'm not saying you should thrust a trophy into their hands as soon as they put the book down - especially if your child is a bit older - but a little goes a long way.

A couple of hours after they've finished reading or even before bed (try not to leave it until the next day) **mention how proud you are of them for pursuing this new habit.**

You could also give books as gifts on birthdays and Christmases so they feel like rewards.

This way books will be associated with something to look forward to and could maybe even turn into a family tradition.



"I don't believe in the kind of magic in my books. But I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book."

- JK Rowling



Day 8 & Beyond!

Reading is a great tool to focus your child's mind and help them to express themselves through periods of change.

Once you've got to this stage, you and your child have built some solid foundations for a good reading habit.

Like with any habit, you'll need to continually practice these behaviours at least every other day, preferably daily.

After all, we weren't born with the ability to walk, talk or eat. These are skills that are learnt from hours of observing, monitoring and persistence.

There may be some days that your child doesn't fancy reading. If this is the case, read to them, listen to an audiobook, browse a magazine or newspaper.

They're tonnes of literacy-based activities you can do that don't necessarily involve the pages of a book.



"Books shouldn't be daunting, they should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives a terrific advantage."

- Roald Dahl



What can we do to help...

Now you've put in all this hard work, **why not use the free Readingmate app to track and log your child's progress with reading?**

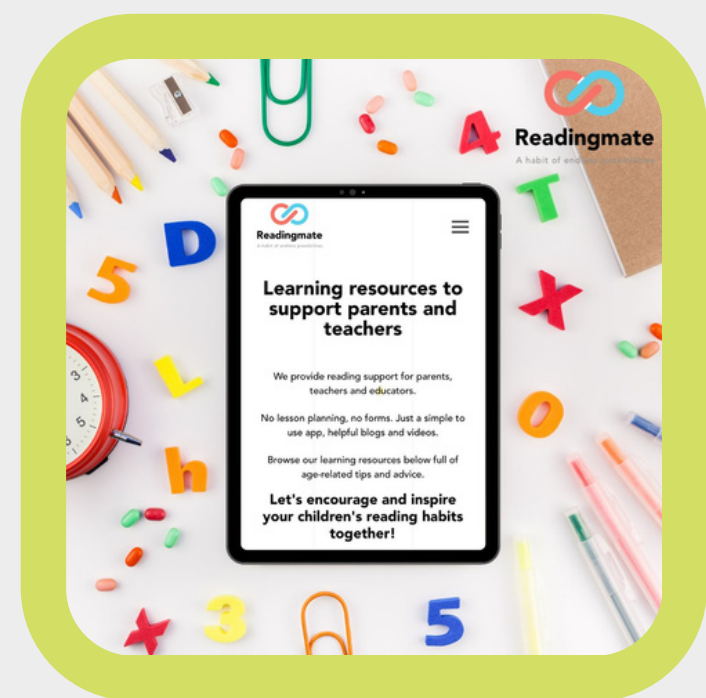
Whilst on the app, **you'll be able to record each day that your child has read, and they'll receive rewards for keeping this up as a new habit.**

If you're struggling with inspiration on what books to read with your child, **the Learning Hub on our website has a range of recommendations, resources and handy tips for parents to use with children of all ages and abilities!**

Alternatively, you can **contact Hannah (Readingmate's teacher-in-chief) who'd be happy to recommend some books for you directly.**



*"Home schooling isn't what we ever expected, its a struggle at times and with this amazing app it can really help."
- Naomi, @life_at_no47*



Conclusion

Hopefully, after reading this **you no longer feel that promoting the right reading behaviours in your child is an impossible task.**

A combination of reading to them from birth, letting them choose their own books and celebrate their time spent reading will **ensure you nurture a true love of reading.**

We all want what's best for our kids and these steps can help them to grow and succeed.

With the right behaviours guided with gentle encouragement, **anything is possible.**



"Books are the plane, and the train, and the road. They are the destination, and the journey. They are home."

- Anna Quindlen

