

# HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WITH

# Reading

**Whether your child is a keen or reluctant reader, the tips below can help you encourage a lifelong love of reading.**

## **1. Keep things real**

Make explicit connections between the ability to read and future options in life. If your teen is thinking about college or a career path, have open, honest discussions about the ways reading might be necessary for success. Find role models who struggled with dyslexia – but who persevered and came out on top. Just be careful to discuss, not preach.

## **2. Let your teen choose**

The best way to encourage kids to read is to allow them to read whatever they find engaging, whether it's comic books, cookbooks, or romance novels about vampires or zombies. The books they're drawn to might not be your favorites, but don't discourage those preferences. Avoid any urge to censor their choices. It doesn't really matter what or how they are reading. Allow young people to read on an electronic device. Online options are also great for those who love fan-fiction. Many parents are worried about screen time, but remember that reading is a habit and for many, reading on a device might be a great place to start.

## **3. Look for books at your teen's reading level**

When teens struggle with reading in high school, it can be challenging to find high-interest books at their reading level. Look for books that specifically target reluctant teen readers. It's also a good idea to let your child use assistive technology that makes reading easier, such as audiobooks. Getting practice with something accessible is better than giving up on a traditional book that is geared for more advanced readers.

## **4. Model reading**

The best way to create a culture of reading in your home is to read as much as possible. The more young people see their parents reading, the more likely they are to follow suit. This doesn't change once they enter high school. Teens are even more resistant to any message that implies do as I say, not as I do.

## **5. Discuss what your child reads**

Talk in meaningful ways about what your child reads. Ask questions and encourage debate. Create an environment of deep discussion and critical thinking. Talking frequently about what kids are reading can help in more ways than one. Help kids stay motivated by having them read short passages and then discussing them.

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## **6. Resist the urge to criticize**

When teens are reluctant readers, you want to prevent them from shutting down about reading altogether. And that means keeping negative opinions about what they read to yourself. If you don't like the vampire stories your teen likes, don't voice that criticism. If you think magazines are inferior to novels, don't share that opinion while your teen is reading a magazine. Be tolerant and encourage kids to read, whatever form that takes.

## **7. Find a compelling series**

Readers who get hooked on the first book in a series can follow the same characters or themes through many more books. For teens with learning and thinking differences, starting a new book can be daunting. But the familiarity of a series can make it easier to understand the text and can reduce the negative feelings associated with starting a new reading task. Find the right characters or themes, and even reluctant readers will be eager to pick up the next book in the series.

## **8. Connect reading to your teen's passion**

For many young people, as reading becomes linked to exam and school pressures, they can begin to be turned off reading. Refocusing reading as an enjoyable experience, linked to hobbies or interests, will help to counter this. For example, if your teen is a reluctant reader who wants to work with animals, make it clear how important reading will be to learn more about veterinary science. If your child has a favourite film, game or television show, look for books based on those. Using books based on existing interests can really help young people identify what they might like to read and gain confidence in selecting books for themselves

## **9. Tie reading to social media**

If your child likes texting friends and posting on social networks, you can give mini-assignments that use those interests. For example, encourage your teen to start following a blog and to read interesting posts aloud to you occasionally. Or you could ask your teen to be on the lookout for interesting abbreviations people use in texts and then make a cheat sheet or to quiz you on what these abbreviations stand for.

## **10. Leverage interest in current events**

Highlight the ways that your high-schooler can use reading to keep tabs on what's happening in the world. Encourage your child to pick up a newspaper or subscribe to a magazine. For teens with learning and thinking differences, reading might seem frustrating or boring. But if your child is interested in sports, politics, celebrities, music, you name it, there will always be something to read

# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT

# Reading

**Talking to your children about the books they read is one of the best ways to support your child's literacy development. Your child needs to engage in critical thinking to discuss a book – a key skill for success in school as well as life. Here are some tips on how to start and sustain a book discussion with your child:**

## **Before your child reads a book, ask:**

- Why did you select this book?
- What makes you think this book is going to be interesting?
- What do you think the book is going to be about?
- Does this book remind you of anything else you've already read or seen?
- What kind of characters do you think will be in the book?
- What do you think is going to happen?

## **While your child is reading a book, try asking:**

- Will you catch me up on the story? What's happened so far?
- What do you think will happen next?
- If you were that character, what would you have done differently in that situation?
- If the book was a TV show, which actors would you cast in it?
- Where is the book set?
- If the main character in that story lived next door, would you be friends?
- What does the place look like in your head as you read? Would you want to visit there?
- Did you learn any new words or facts so far?

## **After your child has finished a book, ask questions like:**

- What was your favorite part of the book? Why?
- Who was your favorite character? Why?
- What surprised you most about the story? Why was it surprising?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned from the book?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- What would you do in a situation similar to that faced by a character in the story?
- Would you have ended the book differently? Did it end the way you thought it would?
- Did the problem of the book's plot get solved?
- If you could change one thing in the book, what would it be?