



Reading Aloud-what's all the Hype About?

"Students who read the most, read the best, achieve the most, and stay in school the longest...regardless of income." Reading is one subject that is being pushed in all schools across the country, due to our falling test scores as a nation, especially in comparison with other countries. The reason behind this push is that reading is foundational for all other subject areas. You can't read a math story problem, the definition of Pueblo Indians, or the steps to perform a science experiment, if you cannot read.

One way to counter this problem, is to read aloud to your children. Reading is based on the combination of vocabulary and comprehension. Both of these skills can be developed through reading aloud. Students encounter words when reading that they would normally not encounter in everyday conversation. Reading a variety of books can build background knowledge, which helps develop reading comprehension. Even if a child is able to sound out and read words correctly, they cannot understand the meaning unless they understand the context and subject. The more experience they have with different stories, the more general background knowledge they will have.

A three-year study was done on raising students reading level, and the researchers came to the conclusion that student success was based on 1) student access to books, 2) personal ownership of the books, and 3) self-selection of books. Personal interest can be the driving force in reading, especially with boys, who tend to be internally motivated. Children must experience the pleasures of reading before they meet the displeasures, such as standard English instruction, grammar, and text they may not enjoy. Pleasure is what connects us to an activity, and we need our students to be connected to reading.

On the back of this letter, I have attached some suggestions and tips for reading aloud to your children. While we spend a little time each day reading aloud in school, I hope you will take this information to heart, and do what you can to give your child the best environment possible for reading success!

*Information in this newsletter is taken from *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease

Book Suggestions/Read-Aloud Tips

For almost every early reader, there are four factors present in the home environment. 1) The child is read to on a regular basis, 2) there is a wide variety of printed material in the home 3) paper and pencils are readily available, and 4) there is plenty of praise for reading and writing efforts. The following suggestions are ways in which you can make your home environment align with this ideal.

- ✓ Begin to read to child in-utero! They can hear your voice, and can associate that with pleasure. When they are born and you read aloud to them, they will associate reading aloud with the pleasure of your voice.
- ✓ Have a book basket readily available at the kitchen table, bathroom, and play room.
- ✓ Make use of resources such as your local library, books-on-tape, TV subtitles, and thrift stores to build access to print.
- ✓ Limit TV time to 10 hours per week. After that, test scores begin to drop.
- ✓ Read 4-6 books over the summer. This is enough to alleviate summer loss!
- ✓ Have a reading/writing wall at home, where they list all of the books they have read, or listened to, and some writings and drawings they have done.
- ✓ All kinds of reading counts—if comic books are what interests them, let them have as many as they can get their hands on.

Book suggestions to read aloud for children in grades 1-3:

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by

Judith Viorst

The Biggest Bear by Lynd Ward

The Littles (series) by John Peterson

Herbie Jones (series) by Suzy Kline

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl

The Mouse and the Motorcycle (series) by Beverly Cleary

*For more information and resources about reading aloud, visit Jim Trelease's website at www.trelease-on-reading.com