



Books Open Doors, Reading Opens Minds



Supporting reluctant readers

Practical tips for parents of primary-aged children

② Creating a reading-friendly environment



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1.

Reading-friendly environments



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Helping your child become a more confident reader starts by creating an environment that makes reading a natural and enjoyable part of everyday life. By building a reading-friendly home, you'll encourage your child to see reading as something fun and engaging, rather than a task or a chore.

Luckily, there are plenty of simple yet effective ways to weave reading into your family's routine.

The goal:
Make reading an enjoyable, engaging and rewarding experience for every child.



"If you are going to get anywhere in life you have to read a lot of books."

-Roald Dahl

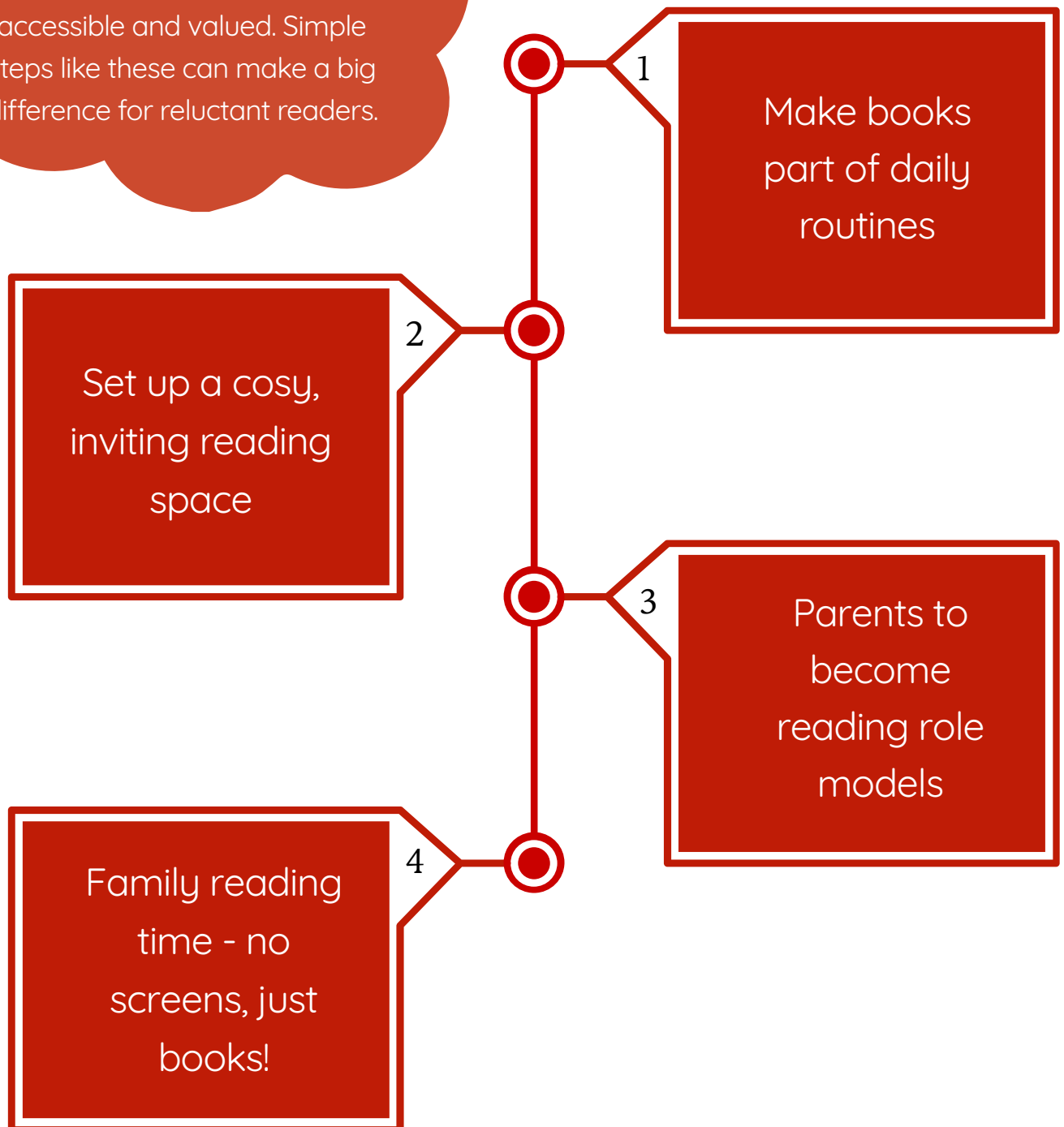
2. Four easy steps



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Creating a reading-friendly home doesn't require big changes—just make books accessible and valued. Simple steps like these can make a big difference for reluctant readers.



Small shifts can transform the way a child sees reading and enjoys books.



3. Creating a reading-friendly home



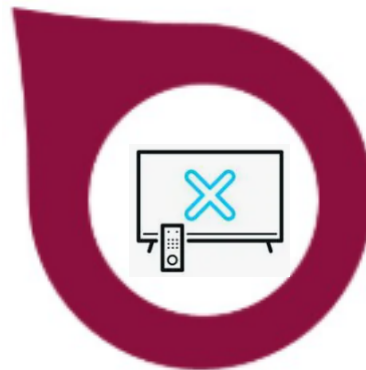
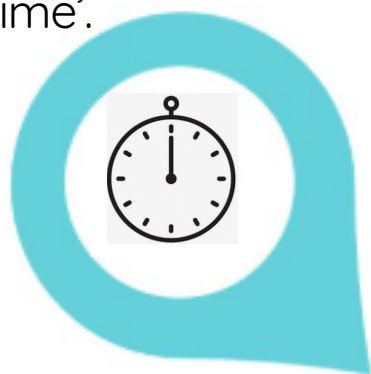
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Make Books Part of Daily Routines

One of the easiest ways to foster a love of reading is to integrate books into the rhythms of daily life. Reading doesn't have to be confined to a specific 'reading time'.

It can, and should, happen all throughout the day.



Family Reading Time - No Screens, Just Books

This may seem like unattainable madness, but the idea is worth some consideration. We live in a digital age where screens can dominate family time. Setting aside a specific time for 'Family Reading Time' can be an amazing way to bond as a family, while strengthening everyone's reading habits.



"I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book."

-J.K. Rowling

4. Creating a reading-friendly home



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Set up a Cosy, Inviting Reading Space

Creating a dedicated space for reading helps to develop a sense of ownership and excitement. You'll notice most classrooms have a special area dedicated to reading for just this

reason. A cosy, inviting reading area gives a space where children can feel relaxed and ready to explore stories.

Pure enjoyment, no pressure.



Parents as Reading Role Models

Kids are great imitators, learning by watching. We can encourage reading by showing that we also value reading.

Complaining and talking negatively about reading?

They will too.

When you are positive, prioritise reading and show how it brings you pleasure, your child is more likely to copy your behaviours and start enjoying reading too.



“There is no such thing as too many books.”

-Shel Silverstein



5. Making books part of your daily routine



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Bedtime

A few minutes of reading before sleep helps children to unwind and feel more relaxed at the end of the day. This can lead to an easier bedtime and better sleep throughout the night. Stories at bedtime with parents are also a fantastic way of bonding with your child. A calm, consistent bedtime routine that includes books will help to build positive associations with both reading and bedtime.

Breakfast

Believe it or not, but a short story or book at the table when your child is eating breakfast can often help to create a more relaxed start to the day. Rather than rushing around, try making five minutes to sit with your child - if you can - and read to them as they eat. Reading is about them listening to books as well as reading them themselves. This casual approach to reading throughout the day once will certainly help to build positive associations with reading.



Journeys



Audiobooks turn journeys into opportunities for imagination, listening practice, and exploring new genres. Audiobooks, when rotated with physical books, are a perfectly acceptable way to sneak more stories into your child's day.

Weaving books into daily routines makes reading feel natural and enjoyable, not like a chore.



6. Set up a cosy, inviting reading space



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A dedicated reading nook encourages relaxation, independence and a love of books. Here are just a few ideas of how you can create a reading space your children will love to be in.



Quiet spot

Choose a cosy, distraction-free corner e.g by a window with the blinds closed, in a bedroom, or even under the stairs.

Comfy seating

Add a chair, beanbag, or cushions, plus blankets or stuffed animals that your child loves.



Books nearby

Keep a pile of books within easy reach. This should include a variety such as picture books, graphic novels, non-fiction etc.

Inspiring décor

Use posters, soft lighting and most importantly - your child's input - to make their reading space inviting and personal. You want them to want to spend time there, so making it appealing for them is key.



Always make sure to include your child when creating their reading space. The more input they have, the more time they will want to spend there.



7.

Parents to become reading role models



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It doesn't matter if reading isn't your strongest skill or if it's not something you typically love. That just makes it even more meaningful for them to watch you trying and including it in your routine.

Read daily

Show your child that reading (whether a book, magazine or recipe) is part of your everyday life as well.

Share books

Talk about what you're reading, what you enjoy (or don't), and ask about their books too. Your enthusiasm is contagious.



Reading rituals

Replace TV or phones with reading during downtime to model it as a relaxing, enjoyable habit and way to unwind.

The more children see you read, the more they'll understand that reading can be a normal and enjoyable part of the day.



Family reading time: No screens, just books!



This may seem unattainable now, but here are a few quick tips you can use to give ‘family reading time’ a go in your home.

1

No screens: Phones and tablets away—this time is just for books, magazines or newspapers.

2

Make it routine: Pick a weekly time, like after dinner or before bed, and stick to it. Consistency makes it a family habit.

3

Set the mood: Create a cosy atmosphere with soft lighting and comfortable seating. Read aloud with younger kids or read independently together.



Family reading time shows children that reading is a choice, a joy and a way to connect. They will begin to see it as an important and enjoyable part of family life, rather than just homework.



“Reading nourishes the mind; screens simply occupy it.”

Support from Schools and Libraries



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Reading-friendly cultures don't just happen at home! School and libraries can be valuable partners, and chances are, they will be eager and willing to help.

Start by talking with your child's teacher. Teachers will appreciate when a parent comes to have an open and honest conversation, where they can sit down and work together to come up with a solution to whatever challenge your child might be facing. Ask what kinds of books are being used in class, how your child is progressing and what you can do at home to help. Teachers really do appreciate parents who are proactive and together you can create a consistent approach to reading support.

Many schools offer book schemes or guided reading programmes, as well as additional interventions during school time which your child may qualify for. Find out how these work and try to reinforce them at home. For example, if your child is practicing phonics patterns or reading comprehension skills, you can gently echo these strategies during bedtime reading. A consistent approach will reinforce messages and continue to build your child's confidence.

Libraries are another fantastic (and free) resource. Look out for summer reading challenges, holiday clubs and storytelling sessions that make books feel exciting and social. Visiting the library regularly also helps children to see reading as part of everyday life.

Finally, encourage social reading opportunities outside of school. Simple activities like book swaps with friends, mini book clubs or reading a favourite story to a younger sibling can make reading feel fun and collaborative, rather than solitary.

By building connections between home, school and the wider community, you give your child a stronger network of support, and therefore even more opportunities to enjoy reading in different ways.

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