

Keep Them Reading

Ben loved to read when he was in first and second grade. But he seemed to lose interest as he got older. Sports, music, computers, and friends all became more important.

Does this sound familiar? Don't worry—there are plenty of ways to keep your child interested in reading. Here are some ideas.



Look for a hook

Your youngster can enjoy her latest interests and read at the same time. Help her look for books and magazines about hobbies, movies, and more to find something she'll enjoy.

■ Connect reading with your child's activities. If she likes basketball, look for a nonfiction book like *Winning Basketball for Girls* by Faye Young Miller and Wayne Coffey, or a fictional story such as *The Basketball Mystery* by Gertrude Chandler Warner. By trying different genres, she's sure to find something that appeals to her tastes.

■ Comic books like *Scooby-Doo*, *Spiderman*, and *Batman* can be fun reading material for kids who enjoy humor, art, or adventure. You might also encourage your child to try graphic novels like *George's Secret Key to the Universe* by Lucy and Stephen Hawking or *Clan Apis* by Jay Hosler. *Tip:* Visit a comic book shop or newsstand to spark his interest.



■ Suggest that your youngster read the book of a movie she has seen and loved, such as Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted*. Then, introduce

other books by the same author, such as Dahl's *Mathilda* or Levine's *The Princess Tales* series.

■ Subscribe to a kids' magazine—your youngster will love getting something with his name on it in the mailbox each month. Plus, magazines are fun and relaxing because they can

be read in bits and pieces. Does your youngster like to go bike riding? Try *Bicycling*. Have him see if his friends subscribe to a magazine, and they can swap when they finish. Or visit the library each month so he can read his favorite magazines.

Read with family

Your child may tell you he is too old to be read to. But you can keep reading an important part of your family's life by trying new ways to share books.



■ Have your child read to a younger sibling or cousin. The little one's enthusiasm for books might rub off on him. And he will remember how much he loved favorite childhood stories. Reading aloud will also improve his expression and fluency.

■ Make a reading date with your child. You can spend an evening at the bookstore or an afternoon at the library. Select books and sit in comfortable chairs to read alongside each other. Stop occasionally to share something funny, sad, or interesting, and encourage her to do the same. Even though you're each reading your own book, your youngster will enjoy the company, and you'll set a good example by showing how much you like reading.

■ Form a traveling book club. Borrow audiobooks from the library, and listen to them when you're in the car. You might



fit in one chapter on the way to piano lessons and another while driving to swim practice.

■ Host a story sleepover. As a family, camp out in the backyard and read by flashlight in a tent, or stretch out in sleeping bags on the family-room floor. You can also encourage your youngster to invite a friend over for a reading night. Her pal can bring a story, and they can take turns reading aloud to one another.

Make it practical

Can books help your child achieve goals, start conversations with friends, learn new things, and have fun? Of course! Choose reading materials carefully, and she'll find all sorts of new reasons to read.



■ Show your youngster how reading can help her do something that's important to her. For example, perhaps she wants a pet, and you're considering the idea. Give her a book on pet care, such as *Everything Dog: What Kids Really Want to Know about Dogs* by Marty Crisp or *How to Speak Cat: A Guide to Decoding Cat Language* by Aline Alexander Newman and Gary Weitzman. Ask her to tell you what she learns and what responsibilities she would have in living with an animal.

■ Volumes of trivia can expand your child's knowledge, entertain him, and give him interesting things to discuss with others. Plus, the short snippets make it easy to fit reading in anytime. Keep a trivia book in the car or bathroom. Look for books with facts, sports details, or world records like *The Everything Kids' Presidents Book* by Brian Thornton or the *Sports Illustrated Kids: The Top 10 of Everything in Sports*. *Idea:* Help your youngster make a trivia game based on a book. Write questions and answers on index cards, and use a board game from your closet.

■ Starting a collection will open the door to books and other research materials. Say your child collects bugs. Show her books like *Small Wonders: Jean-Henri Fabre and His World of Insects* by Mathew Clark Smith and *Ultimate Bugopedia: The Most Complete Bug Reference Ever* by Darlyne Murawski and Nancy Honovich. Or perhaps she wants to collect snow globes. Then, she can search the Web to find out how to make her own snow globe with small toys, water, vegetable oil, and glitter in an empty baby food jar.

■ Take your youngster to an art museum. Before going, check out library books about an artist whose works you will see. For example, try the Famous Artists series (Barron's Educational Series) to read about Henri Matisse, Claude Monet, or Vincent Van Gogh. On the way to the gallery, you can get your child excited by talking with him about the artist's life story.



■ Let your youngster plan a theme party. Maybe she'll have a back-to-school party before summer ends, an "unbirthday" party, or a Hawaiian luau. She can choose a theme by reading a book like Amy Vangsgard's *Hit of the Party: The Complete Planner for Children's Theme Birthday Parties*. To come up with activities, she might check out game and craft books such as *The Everything Kids' Puzzle Book* by Jennifer A. Ericsson and *Creative Crafts for Kids* by Gill Dickinson and Cheryl Owen. And she can scan recipes in cookbooks to find the perfect food for her party.