

Don't let storytime compete with television time. TV is designed to be very engaging – it can even be addictive. Given a choice between stories and TV, many young children will choose the “glitz” of TV. As a parent, you should set reasonable limits on TV **and** make sure to have a regular storytime.

If your child doesn't want to turn the TV off at storytime, give him the opportunity to skip his stories for one night, but insist that the TV still go off at the designated time.



Reading Rx is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation.

Our vision is to ensure that every child grows up literate.

Our mission is to:

- empower medical providers to
- partner with community organizations to
- prescribe family literacy and
- promote children as informed consumers of media.

To request more information about Reading Rx, purchase brochures or video tapes, obtain a speaker, or make a tax-deductible contribution, please contact:

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Dos and Don'ts of Reading Aloud



The Dos and Don'ts of Reading Aloud to Children

Reading aloud to children of all ages is “low tech” – you don't need special techniques or equipment. Here are some tips to enhance the fun and learning.

“Do” these.

Do read to your child often – as frequently as your schedule permits.

Do set aside a regular storybook time both you and your child can look forward to every day.

Do read a variety of books: fairy tales, nursery rhymes, poems, and picture books.

Do read books that fit your child's level of understanding, attention span and interests. The best books stretch your child's vocabulary just a bit beyond his current speaking vocabulary and gradually increase his attention span.

Do carry books with you on errands and trips. Books help waiting time fly by fast.

Do consult other Reading Rx brochures (or your local librarian) for great read-aloud book suggestions.

Do make trips to the library a regular event.

Do invite your child to take part in reading together. Young children can turn the pages or point to pictures. Older preschoolers can fill in key words when you pause, or answer simple questions about the action. Grade school children can discuss story themes and think about how they might handle situations that book characters face.

Do continue reading to your child even after she learns to read independently. She can listen to, understand and enjoy books two or even three years ahead of her reading level. Listening to good books stretches your child's vocabulary, reading comprehension and attention span.

Do remember that your child doesn't need or expect you to be the “perfect” story reader; just by spending quiet time together, you will both enjoy each other's company and have fun. Reading aloud does not come naturally to everyone, but with the practice of regular storytime, you will develop your reading style, while your child will practice and develop his listening skills.

Start with short stories and build attention gradually. Do not expect young children to sit perfectly still and listen quietly. Give them some time to settle into storytime. Invite them to ask questions. If your child is very physically active, allow him to color or hold a small toy while you read.

Do let your children see you reading frequently – for knowledge, for information and for pleasure. Have newspapers, magazines, books, dictionaries and other references in your home and allow your children to see you use them. Make reading a part of your life – and theirs.

“Avoid” these.

Don't view your child's questions about the story as interruptions. Encourage your child's participation and curiosity. Your child's active involvement increases learning.

Don't read simply because it is “educational.” While it's true that a regular storytime will increase your child's vocabulary, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and attention span, the main reason for reading to a child is to open up a world of imagination and experience while having fun together.

Don't read stories you and your child don't enjoy – and don't feel compelled to finish every book you start. You don't have to read every word or every page.

Don't feel rushed and distracted when you sit down to storytime. If you don't have the time to read a story in a way that's enjoyable, it will be better to skip it for one day.

