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## **TIPS FOR PARENTS: HOW TO ENCOURAGE LITERACY AT HOME**

As Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board schools gear up for Family Literacy Day January 27, they also remind families of the important role they play in encouraging a love of reading.

Reading is key to success at every grade level and in every subject. When children become readers, their world is forever wider and richer. But what can parents and guardians do to encourage their children and teenagers to read?

### **What can parents of ELEMENTARY school children do?**

Parents who take an active role in the learning process have a positive influence on their children's reading and writing abilities. Here are a few ways to improve your young child's literacy skills:

- Start reading with your young children and keep reading together even after your children can read on their own.
- Read daily and frequently; pick a regular time to read with your child.
- Read aloud to stimulate your child's imagination, language and listening skills.
- Read a variety of materials to your child such as picture books, chapter books, newspapers, magazines, comics, labels, poems, billboards, menus, recipes, greeting cards, and so on.
- Choose books that you enjoyed reading as a child.
- Be a role model by letting your child see you read. Discuss what you've read.

### **How can you make reading fun?**

Time spent together reading is fun. Here are a few ways to keep the fun in reading:

- Encourage your child to make predictions about what will happen next.
- Talk about the book and ask questions:
  - What do you think the book is about?
  - What is your favourite part? Why?
  - Who is your favourite character or person in the book?
- Link the story you are reading to your child's world. Ask: "Do you remember when we went to the farm/store/etc.?"
- Re-read a favourite book many times.
- Read books based on movies. It's fun to watch the movie after reading the book.
- Use different voices for the characters in the book.
- If your child is able to do so, take turns reading, sounding out and repeating difficult words.
- Read as a family. Let each child and adult pick the story or novel in turn. Read a chapter after dinner each night instead of watching television.

### **How can you make your home “reading friendly”?**

- Place a reading light in your child’s room.
- Build a library corner for your child.
- Subscribe to magazines that would interest your child.
- Introduce your child to a book series.
- Get a library card and plan regular visits.
- Turn off the television and have family reading time.
- Buy books as gifts for birthdays and other special occasions.
- Participate in your school’s book lending, book fair and book buying programs.
- Encourage your child to participate in reading clubs at school and at the public library.
- Attend special events where authors of your child’s favourite books are reading or signing books.
- Model good habits by reading for your own enjoyment.

### **What can parents of TEENAGERS do to encourage literacy?**

Even as children become teenagers and enter high school, they need the support of parents or guardians to continue building strong literacy skills. Here are a few tips to encourage your teen to read:

- Model a love of reading for your teen.
- Encourage your teen to read everything – from magazines to brochures – for fun and information.
- Join a public library and read together. Discuss your reading and ask your teen about what he or she has read.
- Have popular magazines and other publications of interest to your teen in your home.
- Read the news together. Talk about different perspectives that people affected by the news may have.
- Discuss issues together, such as any bias they may see in newspapers, magazines and television shows.
- Introduce your family to diverse people and perspectives through reading fiction and non-fiction.
- Start with your teen’s interests, then borrow related books from the library - whether about human rights, global or local issues, the environment, cooking, arts, sports, favourite celebrities or movies, and so on.
- When writing letters or invitations, have your teen read and edit them to develop valuable proof-reading skills.
- Play family games that involve intellectual challenges such as Trivial Pursuit, Scrabble or Risk.
- Involve your teen in planning both the itinerary and budget for a “dream” or real family vacation.
- Encourage your teen to research interests and careers online, find facts and discover statistics.
- Discuss how you use literacy skills in your job.
- Discuss your teen’s future and the way literacy may be used in specific careers.

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