



NEW YEAR, NEW READING HABITS: 7 Ways to Read More Books

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Every new year is filled with the hope and promise of a fresh start and of course, New Year's Resolutions. While some of us may be starting new fitness routines for ourselves or chore calendars for our kids, I suggest starting a daily reading habit. Studies show that parents and kids just aren't reading books as much – and we're missing out on many benefits (and great stories)! Whether it's 15 minutes (or 30!) where everyone grabs a book – or make a commitment to reading a certain amount of books at bedtime – reading has many benefits for you and most importantly, your kids. You can choose to read aloud, have your child read to you, or read together with your own books – whatever combination you choose will be great, because the more kids read, the more their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills grow. Reading is also shown to help with language development, reduce stress, increase empathy, and improve self-identity. Given all of these benefits for kids AND adults, I put together some tips to turn your household into a bunch of readers.

Set an Alarm: Seriously! There's no better way to make time for something than to schedule it. Set an alarm or put it in your calendar. Pick a time that works for you and your child, and just read. Maybe you take turns or maybe your child is a reader and wants to lead, either is fun and beneficial. Plus, it's a nice way to connect after school and work.



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Visit the Library: I know, you're tired of me suggesting this one in the Kids' Corner, but there's no better (or cheaper!) way to read more books than visiting your local library. Plus, we have really nice local libraries. You can probably walk to Mesa Verde Library, but a quick drive to Dungan Library is great too. At Dungan, there's an engaging kids' area and Lions Park is next door. Did I mention you have access to thousands of books for free?

Listen to Books: Maybe you don't own a lot of books or have time to sit down and read; there's another way to gain access to thousands of books any time for free from your smartphone or tablet. Listen to audio books. Instead of queuing up the "Encanto" soundtrack, in the car or while doing crafts at home, turn on a book. Sharing in a book with your family on your next road trip or at home, is a fun way to bond. You can use your library card to access the app, Libby, for free or if you're a member of Audible, that works too. Audible has free trial credits as well.

Host a Book Swap: Part play date, part swap meet – this idea is a great way to get some new books in the house and help your friends freshen up their bookshelves too! Invite your child's friends to the park and suggest that everyone bring at least one book to swap.

Make Reading a Game: I've shared this tip before, but it bears repeating. Find fun ways to make reading a game. You can play book bingo, you can record books you read and do something special every time you and your child reach your reading goal. You can choose new themes of books to read each week.

Visit a Local Bookstore: Sometimes just exploring books in person can ignite an interest in reading. Maybe there's a new genre of books you or your child has never seen – sometimes visiting a bookstore can inspire a new reading interest.

Start a Book Club: Whether it's for you, your kids, or your neighbors. Start a fun book club where everyone reads the same thing and then talks about it. You can make it a little social event or keep it simple and just meet to chat.

I hope you and your family can explore more fun ways to increase your daily reading time. Happy New Year!

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