

PARENT TEACHING TIPS

. . . on Making Reading a Family Tradition

By Bill Welker, EdD

Parents with younger children in pre-school programs and the lower elementary school levels (kindergarten to third grade) should plan organized, family-oriented reading activities. As a matter of fact, numerous parents across the country have already made reading together a family tradition.

The Chrysler Corporation developed a family reading program entitled “The Family Guide to Reading.” Below are 10 smart tips offered by the program to promote family reading experiences:

- 1. *Time to Play:*** Playing any card or board game presents opportunities for ready-made reading encounters. During this time, reading the directions and game components with your child helps to develop worthwhile skills while enjoying a game.
- 2. *A “Taste” of Menus:*** When you take your child out to eat, try reading the menus together, whether it be in formal restaurants or fast-food chains. You could even help your child peruse pizza delivery ads.
- 3. *Let Your Fingers Do the Reading:*** When your child wants to send a greeting card or wants you to assist in writing a personal letter to a friend, read it to him or her. Furthermore, if your son or daughter needs to make phone calls, look up the names, addresses and numbers together. This would also be a great time to discuss emergency telephone numbers.

4. *Check It Off*: Make a written chart of your child's household chores, as well as activities that he or she likes doing throughout the day. This will also help your child to establish positive responsibility traits. Of course, both of you should read the various lists together. Finally, have your son or daughter check off everything he or she accomplished and enjoyed on a daily basis.

5. *RTV Means "Reading Television"*: You can teach your child to read the television listings in the newspaper and TV Guide. He or she can learn how to determine what is on, reading the brief program summaries often included and deciding if there is any show worth viewing. Should there be nothing of interest on the television, then encourage your child to select a magazine story, or any other appropriate reading materials that you can read together.

6. *What's News?*: Does your child receive a classroom publication in school, like the Weekly Reader or Highlights? If so, ask your child to discuss the people and events he or she has read about. Or sit down together with your local newspaper and look for items of interest. Many boys and girls favor the sports section and the "funny" pages. This would also be a good time to begin teaching your child about the basic differences between news stories (factual subjects) and editorials (opinionated topics).

7. *Family Memories*: When your child receives a special greeting card or other memento, recommend making a "Happy Memories" scrapbook. Have your child read the scrapbook to you each time a new keepsake is added. Also, the family photograph album can be another valuable learning tool. While looking at the

photos, ask your child to explain what he or she sees in the pictures and talk about the events that are taking place.

8. *Pets and Their Care:* If your child is interested in domesticated animals, such as dogs, cats, parrots, or fish, this would be a great opportunity for reading together about pets your child really likes. Should he or she have a pet, you could also read directions on pet care products, as well as any other topic regarding his or her pet.

9. *It's More Than a Date:* How often does your young son or daughter ask what day it is or how long until his or her birthday? Here's a chance to establish a daily habit of reading the calendar together, discussing important historical dates and lives of famous people when their birthdays arrive. Another idea would be to make a personal calendar for your child, filling it in with family member birthdays and other special occasions.

10. *Just for the Fun of It:* Keep in mind, there is no better reason for reading with your child than to read for entertainment. Sharing a great story or even a humorous cartoon is an outstanding way to begin.

Naturally, there are many reading related activities that you can create for your child. But should you be at a loss for new ideas to further promote reading in the home, the International Reading Association (IRA) has an abundance of literature on family reading experiences. So if you are interested in learning more about the subject, write the IRA at 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware 19714 or call them at 1(800) 336-Read. You won't regret it.

Parent Proverb

“He who won’t be counseled can’t be helped.”

- Benjamin Franklin

Next Month’s Column: “Your Children and Propaganda”

(Editor’s Note: Dr. Bill Welker is a retired reading specialist who was a K-12 classroom teacher for 40 years. He was selected as a “Teacher of the Year” by the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Welker is also a nationally recognized authority on amateur wrestling who has written 100s of articles and two books on the subject. His e-mail is mattalkwv@hotmail.com.)