

5 Ways to Gently Build Your Child's Reading Confidence

When children are learning to read independently, some will attempt it happily, accepting correction with ease and without fear of making mistakes. Some, though, will not. Many children will shy away from reading out loud because of a lack of confidence. This lack of confidence is not an indicator of their ability. Many children who are reluctant to read out loud are great readers; however, they have a desire to be perfect and don't want to mess up.

It can be heartbreaking for parents to watch their children struggle with reading confidence, but the more you push them to read to you, the more they clam up and refuse. Even though my son was an early reader, he was not always eager to read out loud around my husband or me. He is a born perfectionist, and while so many things come naturally, his desire to do them perfectly from the start can hamper his efforts. Here are five things we did to encourage my son to read aloud, and I would suggest them to any parent facing a similar situation at home.

1. Don't push your child. When reading with your child, don't force him to read. Instead make sure that you are next to each other and he is following along with you as you read. Trace your finger along the text as you read.
2. Give him privacy. Give him time alone to read without an audience. Respect his privacy to read alone.
3. Read to a different audience. Suggest that he read to a puppy, younger sibling, or stuffed animal. None of these judge or know if a word was read correctly or not. This helps your child build his confidence. My son built so much confidence by reading to his baby sister. Now even though his confidence is no longer an issue, he still reads to her often. Everyone wins!
4. Let your child see you struggle with words. I understand that some parents want to seem infallible, but showing your children that sometimes we have to work hard on a word or two is beneficial too. This was a huge turning point for my son. While reading a book about Star Wars, I had to sound out many of the characters' names. My struggles showed my son that sounding out words while reading wasn't a sign of weakness but a tool to use no matter how good of a reader you are.
5. Don't overcorrect. When your child is reading do not correct her too much. Remember, the goal here is to build confidence. You will have lots of time to work on accuracy and fluency, but take it one step at a time. If your child asks for help with a word go for it, but small mistakes or omissions should be overlooked in the name of confidence for now.

Let's keep this conversation going! How have you helped your child build his or her reading confidence? Let us know on Scholastic Parent's *Facebook page* or tweet Allison McDonald @noflashcards and share!

By Allison McDonald *Reposted Courtesy of Scholastic Parents*



Why Your Child Can't Skip Their 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight

James

reads 20 minutes per night,
5 times per week



Travis

reads only 4 minutes per night
...or not at all



In one week:

100

minutes of reading



20

minutes of reading

In one month:

400

minutes of reading



80

minutes of reading

In one school year (9 months):

3600

minutes of reading



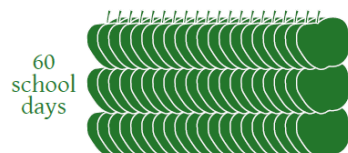
720

minutes of reading

By the end of sixth grade:

21,600

minutes of reading



4320

minutes of reading

Which student would you expect to read better?
Which student would you expect to know more?
Which student would you expect to write better?
Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?
Which student would you expect to be more successful in school and life?
How do you think each student will feel about himself as a learner?



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