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Why You Should Have Story Time With Your Child Today

by Lindsay Medaris

One of the first full sentences I ever spoke as a child was a line I had memorized from my favorite princess storybook. I begged my parents to read this same book to me every night until, eventually, I was the one reading it to them. Overall, my childhood was full of happy memories because my parents raised me with love and attentiveness. Even if you didn't experience the same thing in your own childhood, you can choose to engage with your child in ways that make a [world of difference in their life](#).¹ One of these important ways is story time.

Initiating regular story time with your child will improve their development [now and in the future](#).² Parents who take time to enchant their kids in this great way have the potential to boost their child's [language, social, and cognitive development](#).³ These early developmental changes, in turn, can [improve your child's reading abilities and boost their academic outcomes](#) as they grow up.⁴ Your little tyke will have a life full of exciting adventures with the following suggestions for storytime.

Story time with your child will improve their development.

Read to Them

Even in infancy, displaying parental warmth through reading has been shown to have lasting effects for both parents and their children. Setting time aside to show that you love them will help your bond improve.

Whether it's because of the feeling of cuddling up with your little one or seeing the wonder that fills their eyes as they begin to understand all the possibilities the world has to offer, the

love between you and your sweet child can skyrocket higher than the spaceship you were just reading about together.

In addition to the dreams you'll inspire in your child as you read to them, their language development will likely soar to new heights. As your child hears the words you read to them, they can associate them with meanings, pictures, and ideas. Those associations will empower them to show vast improvements in vocabulary.⁵ You can help your child achieve this with flying colors by

pointing to corresponding pictures and words as you are reading or using fun voices to enact different characters' lines.

Children will learn to read well themselves as

loving parents read to them. Consequently, those children who are read to also show better academic readiness and achievement as they get older. Encourage your child to read along or sound out words as you listen. This

positive reinforcement will help them grow the confidence to face challenges and develop a [healthy approach to learning](#).⁶

**The love
between you
and your child
will skyrocket
when you read
together.**

Tell Stories

For some parents, the "telling stories" approach to story time is a welcome alternative to reading their child's favorite book every single night. Coming up with your own stories allows you the freedom to create fantastic adventures with the potential to convey important life lessons—and maybe even feature your own child as the brave

hero. Though this approach may seem a daunting task for your tired brain, the benefits suggest it may be worth a try.

You have the potential to create lasting memories with your child as you try to tell them a story. You may be able to weave a beautiful fantasy, but you can also try using an old memory from your own

childhood to improve your child's development and your relationship with them. If you do your best to make the most of this opportunity, you'll quickly find that your child probably doesn't care if your story seems silly, unrealistic, or even boring to you. Children are easily entertained and will likely enjoy your attention and effort more than anything.

As you share these moments with your child, you foster the development of their imagination and attention. You'll likely find that as you provide opportunities for your child to interact with you by telling them stories, they will begin to recognize the importance of your time together,

and this realization can inspire better regulation of their attention. [Self-regulation of attention](#) is associated with higher reading scores in school.⁷ So, when your little adventurer goes

off to school, don't fear! There's no need to worry about that new journey they'll begin without you; they'll be ready.

Play Out Stories

As your child listens to you both read and make up stories, they may be inspired to engage in pretend or imaginary play, which is an important developmental milestone. Children's ability to pretend they're a pirate or a princess may just seem cute, but it also shows that [your child is growing](#) in many aspects of development such as imagination and language.⁸ While it may seem silly and awkward at times, encouraging and even participating in pretend play with your little one will allow them to further build these developmental skills. You may hear your child use [words that you didn't even know they understood](#) or see them think up magical story lines that they want your help to enact.⁹

The ability to pretend shows that your child is growing in imagination and language.

As you help your child learn to engage in pretend play, you will also be strengthening their ability to create relationships. This type of play requires cooperation between those participating, whether it be with you or their favorite friend. Pretend play is a great tool for your child to explore how to interact with others—a skill that will be reflected throughout their extraordinary life.

It may be difficult to make time for little stories and books that may be less than enjoyable to you—especially when you are already constantly doing so many important things to care for your child in other ways. However, I promise that if you take just a few minutes each day to fascinate your child with these different approaches, not only will their development take flight, but your relationship with them will as well.

While these benefits are worthwhile, it can cer-

Endnotes

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