

WinkWorld January 2004

by Dawn Wink

Two days ago I walked through Wyatt's room and discovered him laying on his bed reading aloud to himself. On my way through I realized that he was reading *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. I feigned casual *nonchalance* and kept walking until I was out of his room and on the other side of the door...when I immediately and silently started jumping up and down pumping "Yes! Yes! Yes!" into the air with my fist. Remember, this is the kid who couldn't read 2 months ago.

As I walked up the stairs different scenes from the past flashed through my mind; of the countless times I'd encouraged Wyatt to read to be met with stony silent tears; of the previous couple of years of complete and total refusal to try to read; of my awareness during that time that if I asked him to read, the entire mood of our time would change; would go from one of togetherness, happiness, and enthusiasm, to one of sadness; of the inevitable feelings of failure on both of our parts. And tears, always there were agonized tears involved whenever Wyatt was asked to read...

Those memories floated back to me again that night when Wyatt and I cuddled in bed together, him now reading aloud to me *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. "Oh, don't worry Mom, I'll just read this. You don't have to read anything tonight. Here we go." He read to me, page after page, complete with inflection and enthusiasm. He drank in the storyline, adventure, humor, and mystery.

I've also discovered that Wyatt is definitely a sight word reader. He is like his mommy, sounding words out and phonics only serve to confuse us both. Wyatt sees a word the first time, learns it and from then on knows that word. I've learned when he's reading aloud that when he stumbles on a word, if I just say it aloud immediately, he'll look at the word, read it and move on. The next time we encounter that word, it will flow fluently from his lips. If I encourage him to sound it out, disaster follows; he gets very frustrated, the soft, warm, fun mood of our reading disappears, and he doesn't commit that word to memory for the next time it's read.

What do I attribute his newfound literacy to? . . . Well, obviously the hours and hours and hours spent reading aloud, everything from children's books to adult fiction, greatly influences the rapidity that he now gains reading fluency. Some of this event I do believe is also just part of his inherent nature. Wyatt never crawled. He sat for nine months then one day stood up and started running, almost identical to his literacy journey.

Ultimately though, it took me being ready to throw my beliefs about what we *should* be reading out the window, and being open to books that captured Wyatt's fancy that he could read independently...namely...Tra...la..la!...that weird little fellow in his BVD's, Captain Underpants. Wyatt was so busy giggling at the delightfully disgusting adventures of these characters, with the words actually readable to him in small sections, the he completely forgot that he couldn't read, that in fact he hated to read. Instead, he remained captured and engaged, reading about one deliriously appalling thing after another, giggling and exclaiming "Eeeeeeeeeewwwwwww" happily throughout.

Now, he's reading about Harry Potter flying about on his broom, high above the Quidditch field, in search of the golden snitch. And along with Harry, Wyatt too, has learned to fly.

Please note (on the Banned Books) URL below that Harry Potter is #1 as the most frequently challenged book and Captain Underpants is #6.

**[Banned Books](#)