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by Dawn Wink

When we last left Wyatt, age 7, he was not reading, although our days are filled with me reading to the kids, which he loves. In fact, he steadfastly refused even to attempt to read aloud, and every effort became a teary experience of frustration.

Then that weird little man in his underwear, *Captain Underpants*, flew into our lives and into Wyatt's imagination. Suddenly, the hilariousness and honestly sheer grossness of the books, the larger print, and the number of words on a page made him forget that he was reading aloud. So, we began again. I would read two pages aloud, and Wyatt would then read one paragraph. Soon, he progressed to reading two paragraphs; next he was reading three paragraphs for every two pages I read. Now, he reads every other page, with joy, wonder, and silliness. He is completely uninhibited and reads quite proficiently.

We've now added *The Dragon Slayers Academy* series by Kate McMullun to our reading repertoire. We've also added the dreadful (personal opinion here) series of *Pokémon* books. Now, even though *Captain Underpants* is completely gross, even I crack up and laugh and can enjoy their reading. I just don't get *Pokémon* at all, but Wyatt adores reading them, so we've checked out several from the library and have poured through them.

This experience has made a believer out of me concerning following the child's passion toward reading material that is not too intimidating for them. Now, of course I always knew this, but had never been truly tested until I actually had to bring into my home *Captain Underpants*, who is now in some weird way a much loved member of the family.

Read on, Wyatt!