

WinkWorld August 2002

KEY IDEAS FROM:

Reading Magic

ISBN 0-15-601076-3

Harcourt, 2001

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- Reading problems are difficult to fix, but very easy to prevent. Prevention happens long before a child starts school. p. 13
- Children's brains are only 25% developed at birth. From that moment, whenever a baby is fed, cuddled, played with, talked to, sung to, or read to, the other 75% of its brain begins to develop. And the more stimulation the baby has through its senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing, the more rapidly that development will occur. p. 13
- The foundations of learning to read are set down from the moment a child first hears the sounds of people talking, the tunes of songs, and the rhythms and repetitions of rhymes and stories. Children who have not been regularly talked to, sung to, or read aloud to from birth find life at school much more burdensome than they otherwise might. pp. 14-15
- Psychologists and speech pathologists tell us we need to have loving, laughing, deep and meaningful conversations with our kids long before they turn three. These conversations have also been positively linked to IQ development. The more we talk to our kids, the brighter they will be. p. 15
- Because words are essential in building the thought connections in the brain, the more language a child experiences - through books and through conversations with others, not passively from television - the more advantaged socially, educationally, and in every way that child will be for the rest of his or her life. p. 17
- Television does not talk to children - it talks at them and they can't talk back and talking back is what learning language is all about. p. 18
- In his brilliant book *The Uses of Enchantment*, renowned child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim tells us bluntly that children need to know above all that they're loved by their parents. Parents can show that love by giving children time - it may be as little as fifteen minutes a day - to read aloud together, to talk to each other, and to bond. p. 21
- Children who are read to early and regularly quickly acquire the skill of listening and the desire to hear stories. They understand the immense pleasures waiting for them in books and develop the ability to concentrate and relax. 9. 33
- According to Margaret Mead, the noted anthropologist, children not only appreciate the safety of a predictable life, they actually need regular routines to feel secure in the

world. So while read-aloud sessions can happen at any time, they must happen at bedtime. pp. 35-36

- The price of not reading aloud is too high. p. 37
- Familiar words - words heard often previously - are always easier to read than unfamiliar words. p. 47
- While phonics is one element in learning to read, the stories-first approach to reading achieves better results than the letters-and-phonics first approach. Stories-first takes care of the essential attitude problem. Children who have been endlessly entertained by wonderful stories have a joyful attitude toward learning to read. Knowing phonics is an important part of learning how to read. It is only a problem when the teaching of reading starts with phonics or when it focuses on phonics alone to the exclusion of everything else. p. 63
- A brilliant way for children to learn the sounds of the letters is to encourage them to try to write, even when it's only scribble. Trying to write is one of the fastest ways children teach themselves to read. p. 68
- Reading isn't merely being able to pronounce the words correctly, a fact that surprises most people. Reading is being able to make sense from the marks on the page. Reading is being able to make the print mean something. Reading is getting the message. p. 75
- Experts in literacy and child development have discovered that if children know eight nursery rhymes by heart by the time they're four years old, they're usually among the best readers by the time they're eight. p. 85
- The faster we read, the easier it is to read because we can hold in our memory all we've read so far, and then use that information to guess what's to come. p. 111
- Einstein told the story of a woman who asked what she could do to make her son more intelligent. "Read him fairy stories," he said. The woman, thinking he was being lighthearted, laughed and said: "And when I've read him fairy stories, then what should I do?" Einstein replied: "Read him more fairy stories." Fairy stories require the mind to be attentive to detail, to be highly active in problem solving, to roll through tunnels of prediction and meaning making, and to tumble down hills of emotion and run back up again. p. 134
- Fairy tales - like the best picture books and novels - provide children with rules for living. They uplift us all with their grand examples of love and sorrow, courage and fortitude, being brave against the odds, living by one's wits, and caring for the downtrodden. They're the best sermons in literature, thundering into children's memories and remaining there as signposts to a well-lived life. p. 136