

Why Your Child Should Read for 20 Minutes Every Day



As parents we have all heard this cry, "WHY CAN'T I SKIP MY 20 MINUTES OF READING TONIGHT?" Reading is the basis for all learning so...LET'S FIGURE IT OUT – MATHEMATICALLY!

Student A reads 20 minutes, five nights, every week; Student B reads only 4 minutes a night...or not at all!

Step 1: Multiply minutes a night x 5 times each week.

Student A reads 20 min. x 5 times a week = 100 mins./week

Student B reads 4 minutes x 5 times a week = 20 minutes

Step 2: Multiply minutes a week x 4 weeks each month.

Student A reads 400 minutes a month.

Student B reads 80 minutes a month.

Step 3: Multiply minutes a month x 9 months/school year.

Student A reads 3600 min. in a school year.

Student B reads 720 min. in a school year.

Student A practices reading the equivalent of ten whole school days a year.

Student B gets the equivalent of only two school days of reading practice.



By the end of 6th grade if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits, Student A will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student B will have read the equivalent of only 12 school days. One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably, and so, undoubtedly will school performance. How do you think Student B will feel about him/herself as a student?

Some questions to ponder:

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 in life?

WHY READ 30 MINUTES A DAY?

*If daily reading begins in infancy, by the time the child is five years old, he or she has been fed roughly 900 hours of brain food!

*Reduce that experience to just 30 minutes a week and the child's hungry mind will lose 770 hours of nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and stories.

*A kindergarten student who has not been read aloud to could enter school with less than 60 hours of literacy nutrition. No teacher, no matter how talented, can make up for those lost hours of mental nourishment.

*Therefore... 30 minutes daily = 900 hours | 30 minutes weekly = 130 hours |
Less than 30 minutes weekly = 60 hours



Now you understand why reading daily is so very important. Here are some ideas:

- Have family night reading.
- Reading before video games because “B” for books comes before “V” for video in the alphabet.
- Have your child read to you while you are cooking.
- Have your child read to you while you are doing the dishes after a meal.
- It is great to just shut off the television for 20-30 minutes and read, then share what you learned.
- Read the same book as your child and then discuss what happened and how you were feeling as you experienced the story.
- Have your child read on your way to run errands or on the way to school.
- Have a big brother/sister read to a little brother/sister or to the dog, or the hamster or their favorite stuffed animal.
- Always read before giving your child a good night kiss.

There are many ways to squeeze 20 minutes in a busy schedule. What ever you do, squeeze them in – it is vital for your child’s success!



(Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, America Reads Challenge. (1999) "Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader." Washington, D.C.)