



Top tips for getting boys to read

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As a dad of **three boys**, I know that getting your son sit down to **read a book** can sometimes be a challenge at the best of times. But, beyond the obvious **educational benefits**, there is a whole (and growing) world of **imagination, excitement, heroes and villains** just waiting to be unlocked for your **son** as he grows up.

Here are my **top tips**:

1. **Focus on what you can do, not what you can't.** Reading together even for only five or ten minutes a day can make a huge difference, but do what you can. Switch off the TV and your phone. Try and make it a regular thing – before bed is great.
2. **Go with his interests.** If your son wants to read the sports pages of the newspaper with you, using the pictures for reference, encourage him to do so. Comics and picture books are great too. There's a growing selection of books which are aimed particularly at younger boys so seek them out.
3. **Find the right level.** Many young children lose confidence with reading because they are introduced to texts which are too hard for them. Ask your son to choose a book he would like to read and perhaps ask his teacher about suitable books for his reading level.
4. **Talk and talk, listen and listen.** Just by talking with your son you can have a major impact on his literacy development. Talk about what you've read, or tell each other made up, or favourite, stories. Get his imagination going – you don't always need a book to tell a good story. Take time to listen to what your son is saying to you – rather than rushing. Give him a chance to say what he wants to.
5. **Read everywhere.** Traffic signs, adverts, cereal packets, film reviews and simple competition details are good for practice. Carry a fun book with you when you're out and about. Go online together and print off a web page that interests him.
6. **Think outside the book.** Never before have children had such access to a range of wonderful creative story and picture books, websites, applications, audio books and mobile devices. E-readers and interactive books are now adding further to the wealth of exciting opportunities for children to read. As your son gets older, ask him the kind of things he would like to read but also 'how' he likes to read them.
7. **Keep it fun.** Even if you're not a natural reader yourself, remember that enjoying talking, listening, telling stories and reading together will not only help your son's reading but will create memories for you both that will last forever.

Tim Mungeam is Chief Executive of **Springboard for Children**, and author of [Fantastic First-Time Father \(50 Things You Really Need to Know\)](#) published by **Quercus**.

Springboard for Children's ***A Parent's Little Guide to Helping Children Read*** is available in [hardcopy or downloadable PDF](#).

