

LS PICK

A world of magic

At the beginning of every month, my parents would take me to New Market to buy new story books. I could choose four to five books of my own choice, and the sheer joy I used to experience for owning the books is simply incomparable.

I do not remember when I started to read, but I had books all my life, and my earliest memory of a book was with my grandma. She would read story books to me, and then repeat the stories whenever I wanted to hear them again. It was the best experience ever to be able to imagine, to dream...



A book is a ticket to a journey of imagination. It is the greatest gift you could give to your children. They will be able to indulge in a sense of wonder and ask questions that will help them develop essential critical thinking skills.

In the age of high-tech gadgets present in almost every aspect of our lives, it is no doubt that motivating your children to read books is a challenging task. No I am not talking about eBooks in your Ipad or tablet. I am talking about paperback books that have the distinctive smell of books, full of wisdom and magic. Here are some ways you could encourage your little one to get into the habit of reading from an early age:

READ WITH YOUR CHILDREN, EVEN IF THEY ARE TODDLERS

You should read aloud to your children every day, even if they are toddlers and learning about alphabets, objects and colours. It encourages your children to read on their own. You can read together before going to bed and making it a routine activity will incredibly help your children to nurture a love for books.

READ ON YOUR OWN

Lead by example, as children look up to adults, especially their parents. Read the newspaper in the morning at breakfast, or read a magazine or a book in the afternoon when your children are playing in the park. When your children will see that you regularly read books, they will follow you and grow a penchant for reading as well.

INCORPORATE ACTIVITIES WITH THE BOOKS THAT YOUR CHILDREN ARE READING

Popular story books often have worksheets available online that you can use to let your children engage actively with the reading material. Choose fun worksheets that consist of colouring or playing with a puzzle. You can also ask your children to read about a certain activity you will be doing, for example going to watch a cricket game or playing in the park.

You can ask them to read about a famous cricket player or about birds and flowers that they can look out for in the park. You can ask them to talk about what they read on your way to the park or game. This way you can intertwine reading activities in your everyday life.

SET UP A BOOKSHELF AND A READING NOOK FOR YOUR CHILDREN

A bookshelf just for your children in their bedroom or in the living room will help them develop a sense of ownership of their books.

Ask them to decorate the shelf with books and mementos. Make it an activity to clean the shelf together and take care of books. You can set up a reading nook in your house as well

that is dedicated for reading only. It can be a small couch or a divan with comfy cushions, placed by a window that welcomes a lot of sunshine.

Purposefully making these arrangements will create an environment in your house that calls for reading and inquiry.

HAVE A DESIGNATED PERIOD IN A DAY TO LET YOUR CHILDREN READ BOOKS OF THEIR OWN CHOICE

The pressure of completing school assignments and extra-curricular activities often puts the activity of reading for pleasure in the backseat. Allow for an hour in a day where your children can read for pleasure. You can read with them or on your own. This activity will make them realize that reading can be fun too, with no added pressure.

ARRANGE FOR REGULAR TRIPS TO THE LIBRARY OR TO THE BOOK STORE

Getting a membership at a library is a great way to introduce your children to the world of books. You can get a membership from the British Council or the American Center. There are book cafes that have opened up all over Dhaka where you can take your children with you and let them choose books while you sip a warm cup of coffee. You can also go to book stores in New Market or any mall area in your neighbourhood.

Nilkhet has used books that are sold at half price values and it is a great way to grow your children's library.

USE BOOKS AS REWARDS AND GIFTS

When your children do well at school, or when they have birthdays, give books as gifts. You can encourage them to gift books to their friends too. Encourage your children to share books with friends and family as this will help them talk about their experiences reading a particular book.

A list of books for babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and KG kids that you can check out:

Corduroy By Don Freeman

The Very Hungry Caterpillar By Eric Carle

Time to Get Dressed! By Elivia Savadier

Happy Birthday, Moon By Frank Asch

The Cat in the Hat By Dr. Seuss

Cinderella By Brothers Grimm

Guess How Much I Love You By Sam McBratney and

Anita Jeram

Madeline By Ludwig Bemelmans

Thumbelina By Hans Christian Andersen

WINNIE-THE-POOH BY A. A. MILNE

Introducing books to your children from an early age is possibly the best thing you could ever do. You can continue the tradition even as your children grow into teenagers and adults. Of course by then your children would not need you to read aloud to them, but you can read the same book and share reflections. Books are a treasure to all families, and undoubtedly worthy of an investment.

By Nileema Huda Khan