

# For Holiday Plans, Include Reading to Kids

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*One hour a day with a book can boost achievement*

SEAFORD, DELAWARE, UNITED STATES, December 20, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The holiday break is a time where children are home worry-free, with no homework and no school for two weeks. Kids may want to relax and not think about classes, but experts say children will reap many benefits by mixing a little reading into their fun.

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One in three fourth-graders are not reading at a basic level, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress; [the figure is slightly worse for Delaware](#). This number has been climbing because of increased screen time and readily available electronics, experts say.

“For many children, it is easy to spend an hour on a tablet, but difficult to spend an hour reading a book,” said Kelly Carvajal Hageman, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

for the Seaford School District. “If a child spends time reading each day, it can open many opportunities. And reading bilingual books is also a fun way to continue practicing language skills as a family.”

According to Hageman, reading one hour a day can lessen potential behavior problems, improve academic achievement rates and increase happiness.

Most important, children who are poor readers grow up to be adults who raise children who follow in those footsteps. This cycle can easily be stopped by increasing reading time for all ages.

Simple steps to reading confidence

Parents and caregivers can start by giving children access to books, which can start with library visits. Hageman’s recommendation:

- Point to words as you read aloud to your child
- Read passages to a child, then encourage him or her to read to you
- Ask older children to read with younger children
- Create a special place for reading in your home
- Read different types of books, such as picture books, poems for children, or even rhyming

books that can be sung

- Build reading time into your child's routine, such as right before bed

To strengthen readers' skills, you can:

- Read books in front of your child to set a good example and show that you value reading
- Enjoy free reading programs at your local library, such as story hours, craft programs, or PAWS for Reading, where kids can read to a dog and improve their confidence
- Have older children read a book to a relative over video, creating lasting memories for both
- Write a simple story that you and your child can read together, starring them as the main character

Books also make great gifts during the holidays. Instead of a toy that a child plays with and then forgets, a book can create fun over and over. Children may start acting out the stories in their pretend play!

Bilingual reading time for children

Children in Spanish immersion programs benefit from reading at home in other ways, according to Kirsten Jennette, Principal at Blades Elementary School (the school was named a 2021 National ESEA Distinguished School because of its English language proficiency program excellence). As with any activity, practice makes perfect. Finding time after school and during the holidays can make a world of a difference when learning a new language.

"Delaware Dual Language Immersion programs, including the one offered in Seaford schools, are the most effective way to learn another language," said Jennette. "Reading bilingual books benefits all children.

"Seaford students are taught by certified teachers who have advanced levels of Spanish proficiency. This helps our students develop verbal proficiency in Spanish and become bi-literate as they simultaneously learn to read and write in Spanish alongside English."

"The holiday break is a perfect time for students to get into the practice of reading daily," said Hageman. "Not only will they develop a broader knowledge base but also a richer personal experience from reading the different worlds, cultures and language reading has to offer. And the best part is those benefits follow them throughout their life."

Suggested bilingual reading for elementary school students

- Sulma Arzu-Brown's *Bad Hair Does Not Exist!*

After being told she had "pelo malo" as a child, Arzu-Brown wrote a book highlighting the hair of Black, Afro-descendent and Afro-Latinas that celebrates their differences.

- Sonia Sotomayor's *Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You*

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor was diagnosed with diabetes at a young age. She felt different from other children. This book helps celebrates people's differences.

- Lourdes Rivas' *They Call me Mix*

After being asked by her students why she went by “maestre,” Rivas wrote this book to explain gender pronouns to children.

- Chloe Fernandez’ PCD Has Nothing on Me!

Fernandez was diagnosed with a rare genetic condition as a child. This book aims to relate to children who have ailments and miss school and activities as a result.

- Juana Martinez-Neal’s Alma and How She Got Her Name

This book is about a little girl who has six names. It explains the history of her names and how they represent and honor her family and culture.

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