

The role of fathers in their child's literacy development

Dads: Did you know that reading with your child can lead to better school performance? Studies show that when fathers participate in learning, children receive higher marks, enjoy school more, and are less likely to repeat a grade. Reading time creates a bond between you and your child that will stay with you both forever.

How should I start?

Stop by the children's area at your local library, or check out www.ReadingRockets.org/books. Select books that interest you or your child – read about famous athletes, historical events, or how things work. You can read chapter books with older children (like *Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter*), reading a little bit each day. Be patient! If you haven't read with your child before, she may need time to get accustomed to this activity.

What if I'm not with my child every day?

If you don't see your child each day, try arranging a regular time to read books over the phone, or create your own podcast! Your child will look forward to this individual time with you, and you will also be modeling behavior that will keep your child on a path toward learning.

What if I don't like reading?

Even if you're not a reader yourself, your participation in literacy activities at home can have an impact on your child's academic achievement. You just have to send the message that reading is important!

- Tell stories about your own life or when you were young
- Talk about the print that is in your environment. For example, read and talk about road signs or brand names on food containers
- Check out books of photography or art and talk about the pictures
- Involve your child in everyday writing tasks like shopping lists, thank you notes
- When you are doing household projects, describe what you are doing. Use interesting words!
- Ask your child about his day. Engage in conversation that extends simple sentences

Conversation with adults helps children learn new words and practice telling a story – both linked to better reading skills.

Walk the walk

Your child learns from what you do. Make sure the messages you are sending about reading reinforce that knowledge and literacy are valuable, achievable, and powerful.

For more information about early literacy development, visit:
www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c442

