5 simple ways to have fun sharing books

Children who choose to read and who read regularly are happier and healthier. They form strong family bonds and relationships. They do better at all school lessons and are more creative. They enjoy more success in life. They even sleep better!

Reading with your child can bring these benefits, even when they are able to read by themselves. Sharing books means they will see reading as a positive activity as well as 'homework'. Plus, cuddling up to read brings you closer to your child. And it's never too early or too late to start.

Here are 5 top tips to make it fun…

1. Make it personal
You could swap in names from your family. Why not make your child the star of the story, or set it in your home town? Ask questions, too – what does your child think will happen next? What would they do in this situation?

2. Bring it to life
Try using a soft toy to tell the story or experiment with silly voices if you fancy it. If your child can already read, perhaps take turns reading paragraphs or particular characters' dialogue. And do enjoy cuddling up together – this bonding moment is hugely beneficial to your child.

3. Let them choose
Get your children to choose the book to read together. They will be more engaged if it's something they've picked. Be prepared to read a favourite again and again – their delight will be worth it!

4. There are no rules
You don't necessarily have to read the words, because your child will enjoy just cuddling with you and looking at the pictures. You can try telling the story using the pictures alone. You don't have to read a book cover to cover, either – feel free to dip in and out. And it doesn't have to be a story. If non-fiction is your preference, share that with your child.

5. Take books on the move
Books aren't just for bedtime – you can share a story anytime, anywhere.
Why not take a book with you to the park, on the bus or to a cafe…
And by the way…

There is no wrong way to share books. So pick up whatever you both fancy and start turning the pages…

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