

Teens and Reading

Help for Parents

Though they're old enough to recognize the important role reading plays in academic and lifelong success, for many reasons, some teenagers go through periods without showing much interest in reading. Don't panic! Time and implementing a few tips from the nation's oldest and largest children's literacy organization, Reading Is Fundamental® (RIF®), may help rekindle their interest.

Tactics to avoid:

- Pressuring, nagging, or bribing. Encourage your kids, but don't hound them.
- Criticizing what your teens read. Explain what troubles you about certain types of reading materials *after* reading them yourself. Forbid as little as possible. And whenever you can, accept differences of opinion as just that.
- Lavishing too much praise. If you catch your youngster reading, show interest, but don't make a big deal out of it. Teens need to know that they're reading for their own pleasure – not for your approval.

Instead try to:

1. Help fit reading into their schedule. Teens say they would read more if they had the time.
2. Set an example. Let your kids see you reading for pleasure.
3. Furnish your home with a variety of reading materials. Leave books, magazines, and newspapers around. Check to see what disappears for a clue to what interests your teenager.
4. Give teens an opportunity to choose their own material. When you and your teen are out together, browse in a bookstore or library. A gift certificate or subscription is a nice way of saying, "You choose."
5. Build on your teens' interests. Look for books and articles that feature their favorite sports, hobbies, or music.
6. View pleasure reading as a value to itself. Almost anything your teens read helps build reading skills.
7. Read books written for teens. "Young adult" novels can give you valuable insights into the concerns and pressures felt by teenagers. You may find these books provide a neutral ground on which to talk about sensitive subjects.
8. Make reading aloud a natural part of family life. Share a newspaper article or a passage from the book you are currently reading – without turning it into a lesson.
9. Acknowledge your teens' mature interests. Look for ways to acknowledge the emerging adult in your teens by suggesting some adult reading you think they can handle.

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10. Surf the Internet for the hottest titles and encourage your teen to do the same. If you don't have access to the Internet at home, visit the local library for a quick connection to sites that feature book lists and online book discussion groups for teens. The librarian is also a great resource for recommending titles.



For more information about Reading Is Fundamental, visit RIF at www.rif.org.
Reading Is Fundamental, Inc., 1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 400,
Washington, DC 20009

This information is made available by NEA's Read Across America campaign and Reading Is Fundamental so that educators, parents, caregivers, and volunteers have the resources and activities they need to motivate young readers to become lifelong learners.

