



Does my child really need to read every night?

Our lives are fast paced and filled with activities from morning to night. So how important is it that we make time for our children to read every day? The simple answer is that reading every day is crucial to your child's education.

We've all experienced the effect that practice has on our performance in any activity. Research shows that reading is no exception. Regular practice can dramatically improve the reading performance of any child, especially those who struggle to read. Struggling readers often read far less than their peers sometimes as little as 4 minutes a day.

A simple chart can help us see the effects of regular reading:

Minutes spend reading a day	Number of words read per year
65	4,358,000
21.1	1,823,000
4.6	282,000
0.7	21,000
0.1	8,000

From <http://www.balancedreading.com/volume.html>

Approximately 300 words make up fifty percent of what we read. When we can read these words efficiently, our mind has more "room" to focus on less common, more difficult words, so we read quickly and fluently. In children's books the percentage of common words can be as high as 75%. Familiarity with these words through practice, makes reading easier and therefore more enjoyable. In addition, the more you read, the more often you encounter less common words until these words too become familiar.

The effect of regular reading is even more marked when we look at vocabulary. The fastest way to learn new vocabulary is in context, when the word is used in a sentence. From Grade 4 into adulthood we learn most of our vocabulary through reading. Adults who read regularly know four times as many words as adults who read less often. (www.balancedreading.com/vocabulary.html) Students who already know the vocabulary in a textbook can use their reading time for comprehension and information rather than for puzzling out a long string of unknown words.

One of the best ways we can help our children to succeed in school is to encourage them to be regular readers. Some OMS families set aside "reading time" each day when the whole household sits down to read, each with their own reading material. Not only does this make time for reading but it shows your child that reading is as important to you as it is to their future.

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