



# FAMILY READING

- *for parents*



Nordplus

Gift your child the joy of reading!

A joy of reading is one of the greatest gifts you can give your child – and furthermore, it is a gift that is for free and for life!

Here are some ideas for how to create a joyful reading habit into your everyday family life!

Enjoy

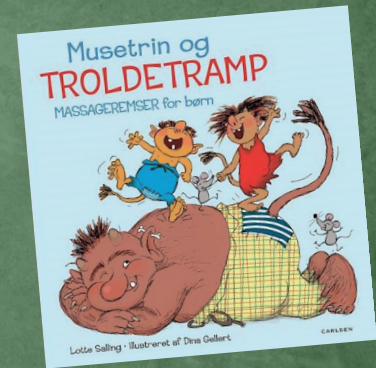
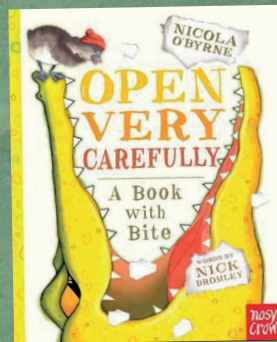
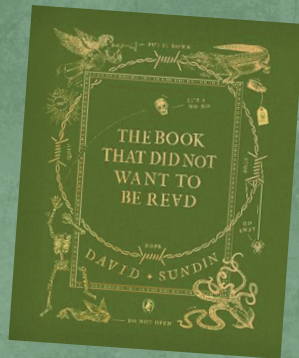




## INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S BOOKS - PLAY YOUR WAY THROUGH THE READING EXPERIENCE

Some books invite the person reading them to play! This can be either as a part in the story, to play with the book or to play as a part of the storytelling. They are fun and often easy to read, both in a cozy one-to-one setting and as a group of people who are all interacting with the story.

You don't have to be a strong reader yourself to read interactive picture books – but the books do require that you are willing to interact with the story! Imagine telling the story of "Three Billy Goats Gruff" without stamping your feet or changing your voice. Not as much fun! So... Make funny voices. Shake, turn and pat the books. Chase your children with a book that might bite. Give massages, make yourself dizzy spinning around and make yourself tall as tree or small as a mouse. Whatever the story inspires you to. And most importantly, have fun whilst reading.



The books are fun for all ages and highly recommendable to engage with children between the ages of 2-8 years.



## BOOK TASTING – EXPLORE WITH YOUR CHILD

When you select books from your library to take home, it can be advisable to both choose books on subjects or with characters your child has an interest in, to engage with your child and in their interests – but it can also be a good idea that you pick random books and explore them together, so that both you and your child go on a picture book tasting together to get a broader perspective of what is out there. Find out what you find fascinating and boring or makes you indifferent and why the book makes you feel that? What different books can look and feel like and what they make you feel? To discover how a subject can be presented in different ways and wonder about how it is done and why that is? What title would you give the book? All these aspects and more are there to be wondered about through picture books. So, pick and mix and challenge your reading palette to get a sense of what your favorite flavor of books is like.



**Idea:** The same as with a good dinner, the setting for tasting books can play an important. Sometimes you may be in the mood for fast food, but other times you may wish to think more about seating, lighting, mood music, lovely fragrances, hors d'oeuvre etc.



**Idea:** Plan a set menu with a starter, a main course, and a dessert. For example, three books on the same subject. Or three books with red book covers. Serve up three books with the same illustrator. Or how about three books of different sizes or three books with pigs in them? Etc.





## METHOD A: VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES – INVITE YOUR CHILD TO WONDER

One of the ways to get your child's perspective when reading a picture book is to pause every once in a while, and ask: "What's going on in this picture?" Listen to your child's response and to make sure your child feels heard and that you have understood correctly, repeat the answer faithfully, but using slightly different words if possible, and follow up with the question: "What do you see that makes you say that?" to allow your child to reflect on what it is they just said and to give your child a tool to be able to give evidence to why they have expressed an opinion. A very useful skill to have in many aspects of life. You can also share with your child, what you see in the picture and what it is you see that makes you say that – so they can see that there can exist many viewpoints and that there can be more than just one right answer. If your child hasn't the vocabulary yet to put their perspective into words, you can ask them to point at what they see that makes them smile or makes them wonder about something and help them find the words to express it. Remember to thank your child to make them know their observations have value – and to give them joy in reading images.

### Example:

"What's going on in this picture"

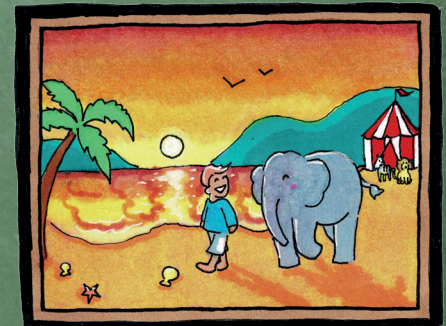
"There is a happy man and an elephant."

"You notice a person who could be a man and an animal. What do you see that makes you say the man is happy?"

"He smiles and he is all yellow."

"So because of his facial expression and the colouring, you think he is happy. Thank you."

You can choose to follow up with the question: "What more can we find?" and continue asking "What do you see that makes you say that...?" If your child has a lot of observations, they wish to share.





## OPEN ENDED STORIES – CREATE YOUR OWN STORIES

In a story, there are often many questions that remain unasked. These questions can tickle your imagination and ignite your own storytelling skills. What is Aladdin's favorite view when he rides his magic carpet? Where would you go if you had a magic carpet? How do you clean a magic carpet? All the questions can lead to new stories. When you have read a story together, it can be a lot of fun to talk about the what ifs in the story (if there hadn't been a magic carpet at all – then what?). You can also create cliff hangers during story time. Stop the story at a point, where it is very exciting, and talk about what might happen next, and then continue the reading and see whether the author of the story had the same ideas as you or not. Or you can create your own ending to the story before you read it: "The princess and her prince got married, and they lived..." Yes, how did they actually end up living? Become storytellers and create your own little booklet of stories with answers to unasked questions.



Idea: Make your own book club! It can be a family book club, where you each read a book in a certain genre or a shared theme (superheroes, the ocean, mysteries etc.), read one book aloud with each other or listen to an audio book together and talk about the shared experience afterwards. Or you can arrange a book club with other parents and their children, where you meet and read a story aloud and talk about it with each other or use the ideas from the story to start a game with your children or do a play or just to enjoy a good story with other people.



Idea: Use your librarians! Your librarians love to give advice on books and on what to read next. So please fire away.





## METHOD B: DIALOGICAL READING – ENHANCE YOUR CHILD’S READING EXPERIENCE

One of the many good things about books is that it might use language that you don’t actively use in your everyday family life or to talk about things. A language that you wouldn’t otherwise actively discuss with your child at home. Some of those words can be very abstract to your child. Before reading a new book aloud, you can read it yourself and find some words you think your child might need an explanation for. Those are your focus words. You can also find a couple of things that relate to the story, to make the meaning of the text more tangible. Read the story aloud to your child once, and then read it again, but this time spend time talking to your child about each page, keeping in mind your focus words. Maybe the word is ‘underneath’ on one page: “The bear was hiding underneath the blanket.” When you read that page, you can have a blanket and a bear, and ask your child: Where is the bear? Do you think it is on top of the blanket? - and demonstrate by placing the bear on top of the blanket. Or is the bear next to the blanket? Or underneath the blanket? That way, prepositions become clearer to your child. You can also choose to play hide and seek with your child afterwards, where you wonder aloud where your child might be? Underneath the bed? In front of the window etc. It makes reading fun and strengthens your child’s language skills.





## STORIES AND CREATIVITY

Having something to draw on whilst hearing a story makes it almost impossible not to start doodling or drawing. And why should you stop? When you hear a story, you are often transported to somewhere else in your mind and you get more or less clear images of characters, places, atmospheres that can spark a creative process. If you are listening to an audio book with your child, you can both draw whilst listening. You can also get inspired by a story to bake a wonderfully fragrant cake or to create thematic motives out of Hama pearls. Slow down and let yourself be inspired by the stories to go with the creative impulses. They add a new dimension to the stories and long lasting and happy memories that spark the joy of reading.



Idea: You can also choose to read a book or more on a subject, for example pandas, and prepare an activity around pandas. There are many good ideas online, if you look for DIY for kids... and then the subject – in this example - panda.



Idea: Don't judge a book by its cover! The saying is true, but it can be difficult not to! One way to avoid doing that, is to hide the book cover. Read the story aloud, and let your children create their own book cover illustrations or talk about what they imagine the cover looks for the story they have just heard.





## Reading tips:

- Read from an early age - books are for babies as well
- Read and repeat - children love to hear the same story multiple times
- Read aloud - and point at the text and talk about pictures
- Read and talk - to encourage both conversation and listening skills
- Read often - even if you only read a little at a time
- Read everything - signs, ads, magazines, posters
- Read everywhere - on the bus, at the park, at the library etc.
- Read and relax - turn off the TV and your phone and enjoy
- Read books - and come to the library



When children are born, they are not only born into a family, but also into a world of complex codes. A world the child needs to understand both to navigate through life, but also to participate responsibly in the caring of and shaping of this world. An important part of this life journey is to be able to decipher meaning through pictures and written and spoken words. Amongst other things, reading is such a valuable gift to give your child. Here are some ideas to inspire you to gift your child the joy of reading.

The ideas are based on best practice examples to enhance family reading from libraries in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.







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