



HOW TO

GET YOUR CHILDREN
EXCITED ABOUT

Reading

LEANNE SHEA LANGDOWN

7 tips on how to get your children excited about reading.

For as long as I can remember I have loved to read. As an only child it was a way to keep myself entertained while at the same time visiting new worlds. The characters in the books became my friends and their adventures opened my mind to the possibilities.

Some of my favourite books included Trixie Beldon, Nancy Drew, The Folk of the Faraway Tree, Dr Seuss's the Berenstain Bears, Sweet Valley High and The Silver Brumby.

When I started writing the Cheer Chick Charlie series I wanted to create similar reading experiences for other children.

Many kids love to read. Many don't. Many haven't even given it a chance.

My love for reading happened naturally but not all children are attracted to the reading process. With so many other entertainment options out there, reading can often be a last resort, or a chore, or just too much hard work.

I have firsthand experience with the "too much hard work" scenario as I have a child with dyslexia. Reading is very difficult for him. Some days it's impossible. There have however been times in his life when he's shown excitement about reading.

I have spoken to other parents who have had similar experiences. Kids who just don't love to read but occasionally show a glimmer of excitement. Grabbing onto that excitement and nurturing it is important for their continued growth.

I have also spoken to parents who are scratching their heads wondering how on earth they'll ever make reading fun. These parents have come to me as an author to ask for guidance.

Out of my experiences and theirs I have created these **7 Tips to Help Get Children Excited About Reading.**

I hope you find them useful ☺

Leanne

1. Read Together

“Children fall in love with books because of the memories created when they snuggle up and read with someone they love.”

Raising Readers

Children learn to love certain activities because of the way it makes them feel and the connection they create in the process. Whether it be with their parents, friends, siblings or mentors, their love for the activity is as much about the shared experience as it is about the activity itself.

To start the love of reading, first start with love in general.

Find a space where reading can be done together with someone the child cares about.

I have always read with my kids in my bed. From the time they were babies I would prop up the pillows and we'd all sit in bed snuggled together to read a book, look at the pictures and talk about the story.

Even with other children I'll create a space on the couch with no television, no radio and no distractions, and encourage the kids to all nestle together against me to create a feeling of closeness, warmth and security.

By doing this we're creating a bond between people and books.

Even as the children get older and are less inclined to cuddle, we can create a cozy space in the house where reading can be done together. Whether it be independent reading or someone reading out loud to the other, we're still creating an environment of togetherness, comfort and love.

2. Role Modelling

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.”

James A Baldwin

When it comes to guiding children it really can be as simple as “monkey see monkey do”. If kids see you reading books for pleasure they’re going to be more inclined to want to follow in your footsteps; particularly if you do it as an activity within itself (not as a by-product of another activity).

When was the last time you sat down and read a book?

Was the TV on? Was it on the sidelines of a soccer game? Was it a fun experience or were you reading something you had to read for work or study?

If reading is not a priority for parents then it makes sense that reading will not be a priority for children.

One of the best ways to get children excited about reading is to role model your own reading. Talk about the books you are reading at dinner time. Let them see you take a book out to the back deck and read on the weekends. Leave your books on your bedside table or on the coffee table in the lounge room. Carry a book in your handbag or brief case.

Let children see books in all corners of the house so that both their conscious and their sub-conscious mind is absorbing the wonder and the mysteries of the written word.

3. Talk about books

“There are many little ways to enlarge your world. Love of books is the best of all.”

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Word of mouth is still deemed to be one of the best marketing tools around, so talking it up in your home is an easy way to create an energy that encourages children to read.

Excitement is contagious so talking about books is a great way to stimulate interest.

Whether it be about the book you're reading or the book they're reading, talk about the story and the characters and create a sense of urgency in finding out what happens next.

It might be that in order to get a child started you read to them for the first few pages or chapters. Then pass the book to them over the course of the week and ask questions about where the story is up to. If children think you're genuinely interested and excited about something they are doing, they feel valued and more inclined to want to continue.

Children absorb our energies, so create an energy of fun and make books exciting.

4. Tap into their interests

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

Dr Seuss

One of the trickiest parts about getting children interested in reading is finding a book to get them excited. To do this you have to know what it is they are interested in.

Sometimes it’s obvious because of their chosen sports or hobbies like skateboarding, dance, horses, swimming, soccer or cheerleading. Other times it’s not so obvious so you need to find ways to determine what might get them keen.

A great starting point is finding out what they like to watch on television. Some television shows have books based on the series. For young children if they like to watch Dora the Explorer then you could create a love of reading by buying the Dora the Explorer books. For older children if they enjoy the Wizards of Waverly Place, then finding books about wizards might be a good first step.

These days there are a lot of movies created from books, so working backwards might be a good start. Watching Diary of a Wimpy Kid is a great way to introduce the Diary of a Wimpy Kid book series. Even games like Minecraft have now been converted to story form as picture books for kids.

For some children a love for reading might first be nurtured through non-fiction books about animals, sport, travel and fun facts.

Understanding what brings your kids joy will help you find books to get them excited about reading.

5. Try audio

"Books train your mind and imagination to think big."

Taylor Swift

Reading isn't always easy. Every child learns at a different pace and some can comprehend the written word better than others.

If your child has a reading challenge then reading may actually be painful and create anxiety.

The reading experience doesn't have to only come in the written form.

Books on audio are a fantastic way to get children excited about reading without the pressure of having to concentrate fully on the visual process. Unlike movies, audio books still challenge the child's imagination and their thought processes to create their own interpretation of the text.

One of the best parts of reading novels is that you get to determine what the characters look like and illustrate the surroundings inside your own head. Your view of the story can be very different to someone else's view of the story. You get creative license.

Books on audio still allow for reader interpretation of the visual.

A great way to still encourage reading through the audio process is to have the book open so your child can follow along with the reader.

6. Book related activities

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”

Richard Steele

The reading experience doesn't have to stay between the two covers of the book. Part of the enjoyment of reading is getting fully immersed in the story and learning to create outside the pages.

Books are most fun when they come to life.

Finding a series that your child is interested in can be nurtured by creating activities based on the books. For a child showing an interest in fairy books their excitement can be nurtured by building a fairy garden, buying a wand and wings and downloading fairy colouring sheets.

Perhaps you can get your children excited by attending an author signing first, or a book related stage show and then purchasing the book based on the activity.

You can also create book-based birthday party themes where the cake, the decorations, the games and even the gifts are all based on a children's book. This nurtures the child love for books and their desire to continue reading.

Finishing each reading experience with a drawing capturing the child's vision of the story is a good way to keep the creativity and imagination alive.

Many children's book series now have websites that have activities the children can get involved in.

As an author I feel very strongly about ensuring the reading experience continues long after the last page has been read so on the Cheer Chick Charlie website I have activity sheets, colouring, crosswords, videos, postcards, wristbands and even “dress up” clothes to help children further embrace Charlie and therefore their love of reading. Not every author does this, but even if they don't, you can still bring the book to life inside your own home.

7. Reward and recognition

"Books are a uniquely portable magic."

Stephen King

Children thrive on recognition and the attention of their parents. By valuing their efforts and recognising their achievements you are helping them to celebrate their positive forward movement.

All it takes is a pat on the back, a smile and some genuine excitement to encourage a child to keep reading.

Rewards can take many forms including a book chart, a milestone gift, getting paid a dollar for each book they read, attending a special event, getting to see the movie adaptation of the book or simply giving a child a hug and telling them how clever they are.

As a life coach I have found that no matter what the age, people all want two things in life. To feel valued (that who they are and what they do matters) and to feel valuable (that they have strengths and something to contribute).

Recognising that a child is making an effort with their reading and reminding them of the value that will bring is a great way to create a buzz about reading.

The bottom line is that a love for reading can take time. Don't give up! Children are resilient and will continue to give it a go as long as we are encouraging them. We can nurture the magic of reading simply through our own commitment, actions and belief in the possibilities. Show your enthusiasm and their excitement will grow naturally!



The “how to get your children excited about reading” check list:

1. Read together

2. Be a reading role model

3. Talk about books

4. Tap into their interests

5. Try Audio books

6. Include book related activities

7. Remember rewards and recognition

Show your enthusiasm and their excitement will build naturally 😊



Who is Leanne?

Leanne Shea Langdown is an author, life coach, speaker and blogger. She is most known for her Cheer Chick Charlie children's book series.

Leanne is passionate about reading, writing and kids which is why writing children's books is her dream come true. She loves getting kids excited about reading and is happy to share her tips with you.

"Because of Cheer Chick Charlie my daughter has found the love for reading." Louise

"I took your advice and she's now continually chasing me to get more books!" Renee

"Sally is reading her book on my bed by herself. This is unheard of! Thank you." Anna

"As we snuggle up under the covers and read about Charlie and Gizmo's adventures we giggle away the day and feel empowered to face the next. Thank you for your amazing books." Tammy and Molly



Leanne is pictured above (seated at table) with some of her fans at the release party for Cheer Chick Charlie: Above and Beyond (Book 7 of the Cheer Chick Charlie series)

Leanne is based in Canberra, Australia and you can contact her at www.facebook.com/cheerchickcharlie or via email at Leanne@achievebeyond.com . You'll also find @cheerchickcharlie on Instagram.

For more information about Leanne and Cheer Chick Charlie head to www.CheerChickCharlie.com