

# Motivation and Engagement

**What it is:** Motivation is wanting to read for pleasure or to learn something and being willing to stick with reading even when it is challenging. Engagement is being interested in the topic.

**What it's not:** Reading to earn a sticker, pizza coupon, or to beat others in a reading competition.

**Why it's important:** Children who are internally motivated to read are much more likely to choose reading and to read more. Reading more increases vocabulary and general knowledge of the world.

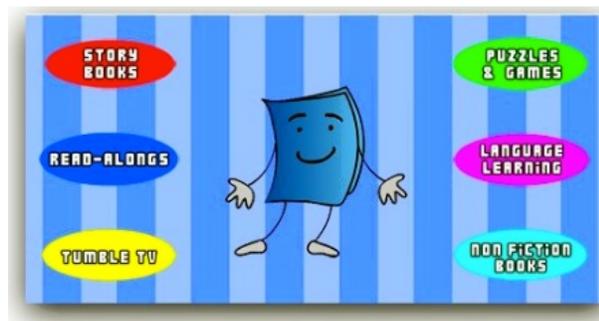
## Ways to help your child:

- Let your child see you reading and talk about the interesting things you are reading! Don't say "I hate to read."
- Explain how important reading is to your life for work, business, and pleasure.
- Allow reading time as a reward and NEVER use reading as a punishment, as in, "If you can't listen, go to your room and read."
- Make it a routine! Have time each day to read as a family.
- Give really GOOD books as gifts, especially those with topics that will interest your child.
- Visit the library as a fun family outing.
- Letting children have a choice is helpful in improving motivation and interest in reading. Allow your child to choose

the books they want to read, even if you think it may be too hard. It's better to have them read just a little of something they are very interested in and provide help when they get stuck, than to read something that isn't of interest or is too easy.



- Make the time spent together **a gift**, not a negative consequence.
- **Read aloud to your child from books** that are engaging and interesting, and most importantly, **too hard for them to read independently**. Make sure you are reading both fiction and non-fiction to your child.
- Don't feel like you or the student must read an entire book in one sitting. You might only have two minutes to read one page in a non-fiction book about ants. Better to dig into that page and enjoy it than to rush and squeeze in three pages.
- Acknowledge to your child that learning to read can be hard work, but the more they practice, the easier and more fun it will get.
- Did you know that giving rewards like stickers, candy, food, or toys can backfire? Studies have shown that such rewards look like they help at the time but actually reduce a child's motivation to read in the future. Instead, reward your child's hard work learning to read with reading-related rewards:
  - A fun trip to the library to check out books
  - Go to story hour at the library
  - Call Grandma and read a book to her over the phone or with Skype/facetime
  - Order a book from the school bookclub
  - Make a trip to a book store
  - Go online and view/read a few books at Tumblebooks (check your public library's home page for the link) and Michigan eLibrary at <http://kids.mel.org>



## References

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