

Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Love Your Library!

by Amber Hodgson, M.A., CCC-SLP

Libraries are interactive places that encourage families to develop a love for books and learning. A trip to the public library can inspire the imagination and spark a love of reading that can last a lifetime! Children who read for fun can pick up positive, lifelong reading habits and strengthen literacy skills. These skills can help build a strong foundation for children's success both in and out of the classroom. It seems hard to believe that one of the best places to develop important language and literacy skills is free to everyone! Have you visited your local library lately?



How You Can Use Your Library



Get a library card!

On your first trip to the library, make sure that everyone gets a library card—remember, it's free! If you are not sure where to start in your library, *librarians* are there to assist you with all of your reading and learning needs. The library not only provides books, but it also provides research materials, software, CDs, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, computers, and more.



Enroll your children in after-school or summer reading programs.

You can enroll your children in after-school or summer reading programs. These programs allow your children to listen to/read engaging stories and then take part in creative activities inspired by the books. To further your children's learning, you can show interest and the importance of reading in their lives by asking questions such as "Who is the book about?" "What has been your favorite part of the story?" "How do you think the book will end?"



Set a "library time."

It can be helpful to pick a certain day of the week or month that you will visit the public library in order to help make it a habit. Another way to help make going to the library a routine is by letting children choose the type of material that they check out. Reading motivating topics or exciting topics can also help to hold their interest in reading and what the library has to offer.



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Help little ones learn to love reading.

If your children are not yet able to read, simply reading books to them can improve their language skills. They can talk about the pictures, answer and ask questions, and feel like they have a special role if they are allowed to help turn the pages. It also helps by making them aware of letters, words, and how books work (left to right and top to bottom). These are important first concepts children need before they even start to learn to read. Many libraries offer preschool story programs, which expose children to books and activities that they may not otherwise see.



Attend different library activities.

Many public libraries offer entertaining activities for the whole family. You can check your local library to see when these events occur. Some great learning opportunities for children include group story readings, puppet shows, various classes, author visits, or book fairs.

As a parent, you can encourage your children to read and enjoy books in many creative ways. Luckily, the library is there to play a big, supporting role in this task. All children benefit from the opportunities to develop and improve their literacy skills, and public libraries give children a chance to get a head start on early reading success. When your children know how to use the library, they know how to learn for a lifetime!



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