

Building a Home Library

1. Johnny Tremain (Esther Forbes)
2. The Wednesday Wars (Gary Schmidt)
3. Anne of Green Gables (L.M. Montgomery - series)
4. Little House in the Big Woods (Laura Ingalls Wilder - series)
5. A Wrinkle in Time (Madeleine L'Engle - series)
6. Meet the Austins (Madeleine L'Engle)
7. The Mistmantle Chronicles (B. Macalister - series)
8. A Gathering of Days (Joan Blos)
9. Caddie Woodlawn (Carol Ryrie Brinker)
10. The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Joan Aiken - series)
11. A Little Princess (Frances Hodgson Burnett)
12. My Side of the Mountain (Jean Craighead George)
13. Little Britches (Ralph Moody - series)
14. The Mysterious Benedict Society (Trenton Lee Stewart - series)
15. The Angel Knew Papa and the Dog (Douglas McKelvey)
16. The Book of Three (Lloyd Alexander - series)
17. The Giver (Lois Lowry)
18. Homer Price (Robert McCloskey)
19. The Phantom Tollbooth (Norman Juster)
20. The Wind in the Willows (Kenneth Graham)
21. The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane (Kate DiCamillo)
22. Crispin: The Cross of Lead (Avi - series)
23. Robin Hood (Howard Pyle)
24. The Chronicles of Narnia (C.S. Lewis - series)
25. The Moffatts (Eleanor Estes - series)
26. The Hobbit / The Lord of the Rings (J.R.R. Tolkien - series)
27. Treasure Island (Robert Louis Stevenson)
28. Swiss Family Robinson (Johann David Wyss)
29. Little Women / Little Men (Louisa May Alcott)
30. The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (L. Frank Baum)
31. Heidi (Joanna Spyri)
32. The Matchlock Gun (Walter D. Edmonds)
33. Oliver Twist (Charles Dickens)
34. The Westing Game (Ellen Raskin)
35. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Mark Twain)
36. Strawberry Girl (Lois Lenski)
37. The Complete Winnie the Pooh (A.A. Milne)
38. Trumpet of the Swan (E.B. White)
39. 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (Jules Verne)
40. Grimm's Fairy Tales
41. A Place to Hang the Moon (Kate Albus)
42. A Cricket in Times Square (George Selden - series)
43. Redwall (Brian Jacques - series)
44. Black Ships Before Troy (Rosemary Sutcliffe)
45. Ruby Holler (Sharon Creech)
46. Shiloh (Phyllis Reynolds Naylor - series)
47. On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness
Andrew Peterson - The Wingfeather series)
48. Across Five Aprils (Irene Hunt)
49. The Bark of the Bog Owl (The Wilderking Trilogy - series)
50. The Green Ember (S.D. Smith - series)

Raising Readers

HOW TO GROW YOUR FAMILY READING LIFE

1. A little adds up to a lot. If you read with your child for just 10 minutes each day, that is more than 60 hours of reading together in a year!

2. Be a reader yourself! Research has shown that kids read more when they see their parents reading. Prioritizing reading in your own life models to your kids that reading is a gift and a delight.

3. Build family reading rituals. Choosing a regular reading time makes it easier to fit reading into every day. Bedtime seems a natural choice for many, but the best time is what works best for your family. "Read your kids awake" in the morning, enjoy a book over breakfast, or unwind for 15 minutes after school.

4. Surround your child with books. Research shows that there is a strong correlation between the number of books in the home and reading achievement. Keeping books accessible will help make reaching for a book become a habit. You and your child are ready to get reading even if it's only for ten minutes.

5. "Light reading" is valuable, too. Encouraging our students to read for fun is essential to developing committed lifelong readers. Just as a balanced diet is essential to good health, a varied reading "diet," helps sustain voluntary reading habits through upper school and into adulthood. There is a powerful link between reading for pleasure and stronger language skills, increased creative ability, and greater capacity for empathy.

6. It's more than okay for your child to re-read their favorite books. Revisiting a familiar text helps children delve into a story's message and make new connections, preparing them for more complex narratives. For younger readers, re-reading strengthens an understanding of pattern, rhythm, and pronunciation in a text. For more advanced readers, rereading provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of a book's plot, character development, or themes.

7. Master the art of book talk. Talking to your kids about good books helps them encounter great thoughts and ideas, and think deeply about them in life-shaping ways. You don't even need to have read the book. Ask open-ended questions that compel them to wrestle with the text. For example, What does the main character want and why can't he or she have it? Who is the most courageous character in the story? For a whole list of compelling questions that work for ANY story, we highly recommend Sarah MacKenzie's The Read Aloud Family.

8. Audio books are "real" books. Classical education expert Andrew Pudewa states that reading aloud is "the number one most important thing parents can do with their children to develop reliably correct and sophisticated language patterns." But who says you have to do ALL the reading yourself? Audiobooks, especially those read by a talented narrator, provide the same benefits of beautiful and well-crafted language entering the ear, and can be a wonderful family experience. Looking for a redemptive way to pass time in the car or tackling a family chore together - a quality audiobook may be just the thing!

