some of the books you loved as a child and read them together.

If you need more help finding good books, look for those that have won awards. For example, the Newbery Medal for writing and the Caldecott Medal for illustration are given to a couple of books each year. Ask the librarian for more ideas.

Book clubs, book fairs, and summer reading programs are also great ways to encourage your child to read. If the program offers prizes or fun programs, many children will be even more motivated to read.

When you have a question, call or visit your local office of The University of Georgia’s Cooperative Extension Service.

You’ll find a friendly, well-trained staff ready to help you with information, advice, and free publications covering agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth development.

REvised by don bower,
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Gale A. Buchanan, Dean & Director

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service
College of Family and Consumer Sciences and College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences cooperating
One of the many important things a child will learn is how to read and understand what he reads. Good reading skills are needed every day for all kinds of activities. We use them to apply for jobs, read the comics in the daily paper, borrow money for a car, and follow directions on a medicine bottle.

Parents should encourage reading from an early age and continue the pattern of reading through the elementary years. In this age of technology, activities such as TV watching, video games, and computers take up a lot of American children’s time.

Children turn on the TV or computer and often sit there for hours at a time. Books provide the same entertainment value as media, but books feed a child’s imagination and knowledge in ways that television does not.

If your child learns to love reading, books can take her anywhere she needs to go in life. The possibilities are endless!

Are you teaching your child that reading is enjoyable and important?

Ask yourself:
• How much time do I spend watching TV versus reading or doing other things?
• How often does my child see me reading for entertainment or learning?
• What kinds of reading materials do we have in the house?

Try these methods to share the pleasure of reading:

**Read aloud together, or read to your child.**
Even when your child can read by himself, he enjoys longer stories with bigger words than he can manage. He also enjoys stories with chapters that “leave him hanging,” wondering what will happen next.

**Listen while your child reads to you.**
Comment on the characters. Laugh and giggle over a story’s jokes. Talk about what might happen after the story ends. Ask questions that make your child think.

**Provide access to books.** Keep books in your home. A gift certificate from a bookstore is also a great present for any young person. Letting a child choose his own book may encourage him to read it.

Visit the library together. Make sure your child has a library card as soon as possible and help him use it. Borrowing books makes reading a very inexpensive hobby for your child.

**Respect your child’s freedom of choice.**
Children show a growing sense of individuality by reading what they want (comics, a book series, magazines, and even reference books). You can suggest stories or books to read, but respect your youngster’s taste. If he doesn’t like a particular book, there are plenty of others to choose from.

**Be patient with “slow starters.”**
What if your child’s reading skills are slow to develop? He can still read comics (and there are comic book editions of classics available), and you can continue to read aloud to him.

It is important for both of you to know that reading skills develop at different rates in different children. But if your child does have trouble reading age-appropriate material at age 7 or 8, ask your school to have him tested.

**Early detection and help (before school demands overwhelm your child) can help!**

It’s a good idea to start a home library for your child even if he is very young. Find