



Bb

BARBARA BUSH
FOUNDATION *for*
FAMILY LITERACY

BARBARA BUSH'S
FAMILY READING TIPS

Dear Friends,

My mother, Barbara Bush, read to me every night. I remember reaching out to turn the pages when I was very small, caught up in the wonder of each story and the vivid pictures that filled my imagination.

Growing up, reading became my passion. I read aloud to anyone and everyone who would listen. When I became a mother myself, I was so excited to pass my love of reading down to my own children. Today, reading with my granddaughters is one of my greatest joys.

Reading with the children in our lives is one of the most important things we can do to set them up for a lifetime of learning. It prepares children for school and helps them do better once they get there. It also creates opportunities to share special conversations and make long-lasting memories with those we love the most.

Inside you will find some of my mother's favorite reading tips for families. I hope you'll give them a try and discover how easy—and fun—it can be to explore the world together through reading.

Warmly,

Doro Bush Koch

Doro Bush Koch
Honorary Chair



Doro Bush Koch with granddaughter Dottie

WHY READ TOGETHER?

Reading together with your family creates special memories and builds a love of reading.

As Mrs. Bush once said, "Reading helps us grow, head and heart. It gets children ready for school and helps them do better once they get there. It's a special time for children to be close to grownups who care for them – a wonderful way to feel loved. And it's a source of pleasure that's always available to us, now and throughout our lives."

There are many reasons why reading with your children is important:

- Children who are read to learn to read more easily than those who are not.
- Reading to children is good for their curiosity, their imagination, and their vocabulary. It helps them pay attention longer, think better, and express their thoughts and feelings.
- Learning new information is called building background knowledge. The more your child knows about a topic before reading, the better they will understand what they are reading.
- Reading to your child leads to great conversations that give you a chance to share thoughts and feelings. It helps your child grow emotionally, and it brings you closer together.
- When you read to your children, you let them know that reading is a valued activity in your home.
- Above all, children love to be read to. Traditions strengthen families, and reading aloud is a wonderful tradition to pass on.

LET'S READ TOGETHER!

8 TIPS FOR FAMILY READING



No. 1 MAKE READING TIME A DAILY HABIT

Try to read with your child for at least 20 minutes a day. It doesn't need to be all at once. Other family members and caregivers can help, too!



Jeb Bush, Jr. with daughters Georgia and Vivian

No. 2 MAKE READING TIME SPECIAL AND FUN

Give your child your full attention and snuggle up while you read. Let them choose the books based on their interests and read their favorites over and over.

No.3 FILL YOUR HOME WITH A VARIETY OF READING MATERIALS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO READ

Visit your library (in person or virtually), find free books online, read magazines, or listen to audio books. Read different kinds of books like stories, fact books, and poetry. You can also practice reading everyday items like signs, posters, and toy or food labels. Share favorite books with family and friends!

Make your home a little library. Put books in different places – in the kitchen, in the bedroom, and mixed in with toys. You can even take books with you when you travel from place to place – in the car, on the bus, or for a walk.

No.4 BRING THE STORY TO LIFE

- Move your finger under the words you read.
- Let your child turn the pages.
- Take turns reading words or sentences on the pages.
- Bring the story to life by using fun or silly voices for different characters. Let your child make up voices!
- Look at the pictures and talk about them.
- Talk about the book and ask questions, like: “What do you think the character is feeling?” or “What do you think will happen next?”
- Keep stories alive by acting them out, drawing pictures, singing, or creating your own stories together.



No.5 LET YOUR CHILDREN SEE YOU READING

Be a reading role model – make sure your children see you reading throughout the day. Talk about books when you aren't reading by asking questions like, “Tell me why you liked the book we read earlier?” or by telling your child about what you are reading.

No. 6 SPEND TIME IN LIBRARIES, BOOKSTORES...ANYWHERE WITH BOOKS!

Reading together is a wonderful way to spend family time. Be creative and think of fun new places you can find free books to read together. Libraries and bookstores are great places to explore all kinds of books. You could even download free books online or use an app on your phone!

Storybooks for young readers help them see themselves in great adventures. Informational texts help readers of all ages learn new things. Reading can help us find new interests or learn more about subjects we love.

Ask your children to find a book on a topic or about a character they are interested in. Then read a chapter or section together. For example, have your kids find a book related to an animal. Your youngest might find a storybook full of colorful pictures. An older child might grab a book filled with facts about their favorite animal. This way everyone can find their “just right book” and talk together about what they read.



No. 7 READ ALL KINDS OF THINGS TOGETHER

Not all reading takes place between the covers of a book. Look around to find different things to read, such as recipes, advertisements, or directions for games.

You can also explore reading using technology. Go online and read a travel blog, movie review, or newspaper. Newspapers are great for daily reading aloud. You can read



the weather report, the text under photos (captions), sports stories, and even cartoons.

When you are looking for books, ask your local librarian or school media specialist for help. Would your child like to read about famous people, other countries and cultures, science, adventure, mystery, or mythical creatures? Choose whatever you think might capture their imagination.

For very young children, look for picture books with stories and artwork that are simple, clear, and

colorful. Use children's interests and hobbies as starting points.

Find something for your child to read that really interests them. Their interest is great motivation for them to read more.

Read old favorites as well as new stories. Children love to reread stories they know well, and it helps develop memory skills. Rhymes and songs are especially good for reading aloud, and young children love to join in on favorite parts.



8 No. KEEP READING ALOUD EVEN AFTER YOUR CHILDREN LEARN TO READ

Parents—and educators too—sometimes feel that children over the age of seven or eight years old don't want to be read to. This really is not true. Mrs. Bush strongly believed that you're never too old to be read to.

Reading aloud as a family can be fun. Choose a family friendly book and read a small section or chapter each day. You may even take turns reading sections of a book to each other.

As children get older, you want to encourage them to continue reading. One of the best ways to keep them reading is to read to or with them regularly.



“Parents are their child’s first teachers, and the home is the child’s first school. One of the most important things parents can do to help their children succeed in school is to read to them early and often.”

—Barbara Bush



BARBARA BUSH
FOUNDATION *for*
FAMILY LITERACY



@BarbaraBushFdn



@barbarabushfoundation



@BarbaraBushFoundation

P.O. Box 34010
Washington, D.C. 20043

barbarabush.org

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy is a nonprofit, public charitable organization recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. © 2024 Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy