

Creating a Personal Library

Help your children learn to love reading by creating a library or reading nook just for them. Giving them a special space for reading makes it easy for them to curl up with a book. Children can store their books and writing supplies in their library, as well as go there to read. They can use their library to read books, magazines, newspapers, comic books or anything else they enjoy. Below are some tips for making a space where children can feel comfortable and relaxed about reading.

- 1.** Decide with your child where the space should be. Have it be somewhere quiet and well lit, away from the TV and other distractions.
- 2.** Plan out the space together, with room for books and a sitting area. Try to use as many of your child's ideas as possible.
- 3.** Use an old bookshelf or bookcase for books. If there are none available, create one out of boxes, baskets, or crates. If your child is young and likely to pull a bookshelf or stacked boxes over, be sure to secure the bookshelf.
- 4.** Your child can use the library to keep personal books or books on loan from the library. If you have both, be sure to keep the library books separate. Keep the bookshelf well stocked with trips to the library, bookstore, or yard sales for less expensive used books.
- 5.** Let your child decide how he or she wants to organize the books – by title, author, or subject. As much as possible, let children choose their own books and reading materials.
- 6.** Give your child books, comic books, or magazine subscriptions as gifts.
- 7.** Leave all sorts of reading materials, including books, magazines, and colorful catalogs, lying around the house. Tell your child what he or she can take and put in the library.
- 8.** Set some loose guidelines for how much time your child spends in the library. For example, encourage library time on days when your child spends more than an hour with the TV or video games. Or serve your child an after-school snack in the library.
- 9.** Use the library as a place to display your child's artwork and writing. Along with the books, keep it stocked with paper, pencils, pens, and crayons. Tack your child's work on the sides of the bookshelf or on a bulletin board.
- 10.** Keep the library cozy with pillows, blankets, or a beanbag chair so your child will feel at home.

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF) is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit children's literacy organization. For more information about RIF, visit www.rif.org.

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