



Every child. Every parent. Every day.

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Survey: Reading Aloud Faces “Tech” Competition

A new survey highlights the intense competition that advice for families to read aloud daily faces in home environments saturated with electronic devices. The Read Aloud Survey, conducted by YouGov for the non-profit Read Aloud 15 MINUTES, finds that 40 percent of parents believe their child spends too much time watching TV, and one third believe their child spends too much time with electronic devices; at the same time, four in ten parents feel their child does not spend enough time being read to. Most parents reported that children had ready access to electronics — over half of parents said their child uses a television (65%) or a tablet (54%) at home.

“As dynamic and interesting as electronic devices may be, they are no substitute for reading aloud, especially for young children,” says Dr. John Hutton, a pediatrician and clinical researcher at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Reading and Literacy Discovery Center.

As part of his new role as “SpokesDoctor” for the Read Aloud 15 MINUTES National Campaign, Dr. Hutton’s mission is to educate parents about how reading aloud is an ideal — and essential — activity for healthy brain development.

“During the span between birth and age 8, there are unique and fleeting opportunities for parents to foster language and social-emotional connections, expand knowledge, imagination, and a sense of being loved, and stimulate brain networks that make reading and learning possible,” Dr. Hutton says. “Consistent reading aloud with a caring grownup provides a simple, ideal way to do this — and despite educational claims, electronic devices can’t fill this role.”

Yet, even as science continues to reinforce the importance of brain development during these early years, the Read Aloud survey finds that fewer than half (46%) of parents read aloud to their children every day, and only 34% do so for at least 15 minutes. Fewer than one in 10 parents reported reading aloud daily for 15 minutes from birth.

“I believe as parents gain a deeper understanding of how something as simple and low-tech as reading aloud every day for 15 minutes from birth can provide such profound, lifelong benefits to their child, they will make it a priority,” Dr. Hutton says. “And they they’ll be glad they did.”

Dr. Hutton’s prescriptions for reading aloud, as well as the Read Aloud Survey, are part of a variety of innovative and engaging materials available for March Read Aloud Month. The month-long campaign brings together a diverse coalition of partners — from corporations such as UPS and Home Depot, to educational giants such as SUNY and the University of North Carolina, to more than 10,000 grassroots partners in all 50 states — that collaborate to reach a broad audience of millions of parents and caregivers nationwide.

To learn more or to participate in March Read Aloud Month, visit ReadAloud.org.

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