How to Raise a Reader

ENCOURAGING your child to read can open up new and exciting worlds and lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning. You can start at any age. Here’s how:

• Talk with your children. “Talking provides the foundation for learning to and loving to read,” says Cindy Hoisington, an early childhood educator with the nonprofit Education Development Center in Newton, Mass. Talking about everything and anything that you see and do helps children build vocabulary and language skills.

• Be a reading role model. Make reading material accessible, and let kids see you enjoy reading. “You can’t sit in front of a TV and tell your kid to read,” Hoisington says.

• Read to your child for 10 to 15 minutes a day.

• Let them choose what they want to read. “In school, kids get assigned reading, so let them choose their own reading material at home,” says Francie Alexander, chief academic officer at Scholastic Education in New York City.

• Start a family book club. “Suggest books you loved when you were younger, and your children can choose books about things they love when it is their turn to choose,” Alexander says.

• Hook them on a series. A book series can keep children engaged and engrossed. They are available for every age group.

• Reward your child with reading time. Some kids will do anything to stay up a few minutes longer at night.

• Try technology. “Kids are attracted to technology, so use technology to get them to read more,” Alexander says. Many books, authors and publishers offer online activities such as games involving the main characters or ways to connect with other fans.