



## ***What to Read When***

*The Books and Stories to Read to Your Child and All the Best Times to Read Them*  
A WebbyBites Video

### **Pam Allyn**

Author, *What to Read When & The Complete 4 Series*, Executive Director, LitLife & LitWorld  
[PamAllyn.ning.com](http://PamAllyn.ning.com), [WhatToReadWhen.com](http://WhatToReadWhen.com), [LitLifeInfo.com](http://LitLifeInfo.com), [LitWorld.org](http://LitWorld.org)

---

### ***The Four Keys to Helping Your Child Become a Lifelong Reader: R.E.A.D.***

#### **R = Ritual**

- Rituals are important for all aspects of life
- Rituals provide comfort and joy, through predictability your child can take risks and learn new things
- Important to create rituals for reading aloud with all your children together, as well as each individual child
- Reading together can build family relationships, it allows you to learn more about one another
- Reading at night is wonderful, you can also read at bath time, read in your kitchen while your child helps you cook dinner, read on the playground
- Holidays are especially fitted for creating great rituals around reading aloud

#### **E = Environment**

- Establish an environment conducive to reading aloud
- By environment I mean the physical layout of the space where you and your child will actually read together
- Some children need a very special read-aloud environment where the conditions are just right
- Let your child create the read-aloud environment with you
- Look around your home and ask yourself, what might get in the way of a tranquil reading experience?
- Environment should reflect the value of literacy (Ex: Don't let the TV compete for your child's mental focus and personal space)
- Put books where your child can reach them on his or her own (Consider baskets instead of bookshelves)
- What belongs in the environment?
  - Books, magazines
  - Writing materials
  - Sounds/visuals that might compel your child toward print
  - You and your child!

## A= Access

- Access is about the right text at the right time
- Three levels of Books:
  - Uphill books - hard but with a strong interest component that compels kids
  - Level books - just right for your kids and feel like a comfortable shoe
  - Downhill books - appear "easy" but are actually critical for your kids in terms of building their reading abilities; they can read them quickly and they are generally on topics of interest or comfort for your kids
- Access also means the physical presence of books in your home
  - Baskets - portable within your home or car
  - Plastic Ziploc Bags - put your child's name on their bag, restock them for car or subway rides, make each bag unique to each child
- A study by the National Endowment of the Arts found that homes with ten or more children's books have a profound influence on how kids do in school, and later in life

## D = Dialogue

- From the earliest moments reading aloud facilitates a pattern for dialogue with your baby
- The back-and-forth conversations you have with your child set the stage for his or her future interactions, with you and others
- Ask yourself:
  - Is it unjudging?
  - Joyous?
  - Engaged?
  - Inquiring?
- As the dialogue changes, you must continue to ask yourself: What are the ways I'm going to engage with my child's reading life, even as they develop independence?
- Our goal is lifelong dialogue with our children
- In dialogue, the listening is as important as the talking
- Some of the best dialogue is the inquiry -- some questions to spark inquiry are:
  - What are your biggest questions about what we are reading?
  - What does this story remind you of in your own life?
  - How could reading this book change you or your thinking?
- Genuine dialogue = Mutual Inquiry
  - Explore ideas together
  - Value each other's opinions
  - Ask questions you don't know the answers to
- For even more tips to encourage lifelong literacy, as well as recommendations for books to read with your children at any time, check your local bookstore or library for *What to Read When*, or visit the online bookstore at [WhatToReadWhen.com](http://WhatToReadWhen.com).