

Chapter Fourteen

THERE'S MORE TO *PTR* THAN JUST LEARNING TO READ

As if your child being an amazing reader isn't enough, consider these benefits that you can expect from reading and discussing a good story.

The Love of Learning The love of reading is the door to the love of learning. With books for every possible interest, this means a lifetime of joy while learning from great minds.

Reading is Like Riding a Bicycle Once you “get it”, you never lose it.

***PTR* Builds Comprehension.** Reading is much more fun when you understand the story. Your child builds good comprehension skills while the two of you enjoy the story together, discussing what is happening and what it means.

An Excellent Vocabulary Without Memorizing Lists of Words Our brains learn and remember in the context of a story. Reading a book with an advanced vocabulary is what makes the difference. Besides ***getting an excellent vocabulary***, your child will be ***using an excellent vocabulary***.

Spelling, Grammar and Essay Writing By reading great literature, your child will become used to seeing excellent writing. When it's time to write essays, guess what will be his idea of good writing—all the fine books he's read. Not every child will be a perfect speller or a great essay writer, but he'll have the chance to be the best he can be.

SOME SURPRISING ADDED BENEFITS

Even if you are convinced the first five benefits are worth your 30 minutes, several times a week, the following are easily the more important benefits of all.

Improved Communication Skills A wonderful thing occurs when you discuss what happens in the story. By asking your child about the meaning of the

sentences, he learns how to explain what he understands. Besides a necessary step to comprehension, it's the beginning of two important skills—how to figure out what something means, and how to confidently share his ideas. You'll be training your child how to think and communicate.

Improved Performance in School, Plus Confidence in His Ability

When your child shows up at school, he will be judged—by his teacher, the other students and by himself. That's life. What the teacher sees will go into his permanent record file, which follows him for the rest of his school life. The other children will judge his looks, if he's good at sports, and if they think he is smart or dumb. This is know this is true because we all went through it.

If your child shows up at school already an excellent reader, this will go in his record. Studies have shown that when a teacher believes a child is smart, the child's performance in school is positively affected. A child's belief in himself and his ability can be the difference between success and failure. Once a child makes up his mind, one way or another, it's really hard to change it.

School Will be Much Easier With your child loving to read, he might even want to read his textbooks. Then all the courses become easier: math, science, history. Believing he is smart, there's a better chance he'll enjoy school and learning. People like to do what they are "good at" and they avoid the things they are "bad at". Do you think a high reading ability might help when he takes tests?

Less Struggle at Home Might your child do his homework and get it done faster if he likes learning and it's easy for him?

A Good Foundation for Your Relationship with Your Child. If *PTR* improves communication skills, imagine what eight months of sharing a great story together will do for your relationship with him. At the age of six, eight months seem like forever. By the time you finish reading your book together, your child will think he has been able to talk with you about anything his whole life. By the time he gets to his teens, this may be the difference in whether he chooses to talk to you at all. If you don't create a "talking relationship" when your child is young, you may not get the chance when he is older.

Placing Your Values in His Heart While reading a good book, there will be many opportunities to discuss life issues of morality and ethics. In the same

way we learn vocabulary, we learn ideas and values in the context of a story, which helps us remember them. Also, our kids learn as much from what we do as from what we say. When we take time to teach our children what's important, they learn partly because they love being with us. They also want to learn from us because they know (by our actions) that we love them.

Spending This Time Together Tells Him He's Important to Us

How many adults sit in a therapist's office saying they wish their parents had spent *less time* with them? If you teach your children to read and prepare them so that school is easier for them, while building a relationship of trust and encouragement, do you think they might notice? My son was 14 when he was asked at a men's retreat how his father had blessed him. His answer to this group of older men, "My dad taught me to read."

What's the Point?

This may surprise you, but learning to read is possibly the least important benefit of *Point to Reading*. Learning how to read is no big deal since everyone can do it, to a greater or lesser degree. Loving to read—being really good at it, and being someone who loves to learn—now that is something worth aiming for.

Point to Reading is about doing for your children what no one else can do better than a parent—preparing them and guiding them through one of the most difficult phases of their lives when they will step into the world for the first time. In addition to all the benefits mentioned above, they'll learn to read, too. Not bad for just reading a story with them.