# **Ways to encourage reading habits and increase imagination power among kids**

**Source: Parenting Desk, the Indian Express**

The [COVID-19](https://indianexpress.com/about/coronavirus/) pandemic has tested and continues to test us (as individuals and parents) and our children in ways we didn’t even imagine existed. Flexibility and quick adaptation to each curveball that the pandemic has thrown our way has been taxing on everybody.

Children are the silent sufferers. The parents went back to school with online classes and the kids quickly fell in love with the screen. Currently, children and youngsters are experiencing reduced attention span and [**refuse to sit down and read**](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/learning/92-per-cent-children-in-india-read-books-for-fun-says-survey-6221570/). Over the years, while talking to parents and learning with my daughter, I have managed to make a list that might help you boost your child’s imagination power thus enabling them to be better readers:

**Make reading a part of your daily routine**: Set aside some time during the day or just before you hit the bed to sit together and read. If you have a young adult at home, then you can discuss the novel(s) that he/she has been reading. Asking intriguing questions will further their curiosity thus enabling them to read more. With children who are still learning to read, sit with them and [read the storybook aloud](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/events-things-to-do/reading-challenge-for-kids-delhi-6091564/). Children love a routine and soon this activity is what they will look forward to with excitement in their cute little eyes.

**Personalized storybooks**: A trending concept and the need of the hour is personalized storybooks. When your child is the hero of the story, they are enchanted. The stories spark your child’s imagination and invigorates curiosity. Reading books that contain visual illustrations which helps the child connect text with the scene.

**Read signboards:** This is a trick I enjoy playing on my little girl. I ask her to help me read (citing my inability) alphabets and words on the signboards as we walk past them. What is noticeable is that when you ask for their help, [**they feel responsible**](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/learning/five-essentials-to-meaningful-play-for-kids-7527925/) and immediately step up to the occasion.

**Book series:** Book series are a great way to pique your child’s interest. Keeps the ever-looming question of “what to read next?” at bay. You could also try non-series books by the same author.

**Reading strategies:** Observe why your child dislike reading. Could it be because of words that seem tough for her, or when she asks you a question you are unavailable to answer? Decode the words using phonemes. This branch of linguistics studies distinct units of sound in a language. Help your child cross these small hurdles and reading will be a happy hour for them.

**Reading the same story multiple times:** If your child asks you to re-read the same story multiple times, don’t refuse. This act helps them memorize the words and increase their vocabulary. Do a role reversal and ask them to try and narrate the story to you.

**Introduce them to a library near you:** Library to me is a mecca for reading; genres, authors – you are spoilt for choice. Take your child to the library and ask them to choose books. Academic or non-academic, any kind of reading is good.

**Book clubs:** Encourage your children to form book clubs with their friends and [discuss a book that they have recently read](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/learning/keep-your-kid-busy-with-picture-books-here-are-10-recommendations-6374124/). As a kid, during summer, we had our own book club in our garage where we spent hours discussing, reading and exchanging books.

**Bottomline**

Children go through different phases while studying- sometimes they are exemplary (you envision them as the next best NASA scientist) and yet other times they just fail to sit down to study. [**Patience and consistency is the key**](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/learning/top-childrens-books-of-2019-6193103/). We have to keep trying ways to encourage them to read. Reading increases general knowledge and is a great stressbuster. It is imperative to understand how learning to read early in their lives shapes their future.

Remember, if your child struggles with any skill, stop and encourage them. Else, it might make them feel inferior. Celebrate their small wins like learning a new word or reading a complete line all by themselves.