**WHY READING ALOUD TO OLDER CHILDREN IS A GOOD IDEA**

**Source: Tulika Singh, Author, Obsessive Mom & Book Blogger**

I lie on my stomach, chin propped up on my hands, a book open in front of me, reading aloud. The book is ‘Wonder’ by R. J. Palacio.

The twins are ten years old and yes I still read aloud to them. They’ve been reading on their own for some time now yet for some reason they love to hear me. Each night we snuggle up and we go through a chapter or two. We take a month, to finish a book sometimes more if it’s a big one. They don’t seem to mind.

Since when they were babies, they have loved stories. When they were younger they insisted I narrate it in my own words. Slowly they got used to me reading.

As they grew they started reading on their own but I didn’t stop our nightly sessions. I took up different books – bigger books, books with better vocabulary, books handling trickier issues. And we kept on reading. It has become a night-time ritual of sorts.

I’ve found I enjoy it as much as the children.

**Here are seven reasons why reading aloud to older kids is good for them too:**

* **It nourishes their passion for stories**

The twins aren’t very avid readers. I didn’t want their lack of proficiency in reading to rob them of their love for stories, which they love passionately. Listening to me read, keep their imaginations alive and their minds ticking.

* **Its whets their appetite for reading**

There has hardly been a day when I have been able to stop without the twins begging for more. Yet, there are days when I just have to stop. And one day I found one of them carrying the book to school ‘to read on the buses’ because he just couldn’t wait to find out what happened. Of course that complicated things a bit because he had read it and the other one hadn’t. But interestingly he never minds it when I re-read those bits. That’s another mystery about kids – they don’t mind listening to their favourite stories over and over again.

* **It encourages them to try different kinds of books**

The kids pretty much pick their own books. Their favourite reads include Wimpy Kid, Dork Diaries, Captain Underpants and Tom Gates. I try to let them be. However, when I read to them I have a say in the book we choose. This becomes a great way to introduce them to new and different ones.

* **It encourages them to try bulkier books**

The text heavy books still put them off. And those are the ones I pick. I’m hoping they will realize that great stories emerge from those fat books. And that one needs patience to truly savour a riveting read.

* **It adds to their vocabulary**

When they read on their own they often skip words they don’t understand or deduce their meaning, which isn’t bad at all. However, when we read they often stop me to ask what exactly a word means. They ask about varied usages of words and exclaim if they stumble upon a biggie second time round (especially homophones and homonyms).

* **It helps talk about sensitive issues**

The discussions we have are priceless. ‘Wonder’ gave us the chance to talk about middle school, about bullying and about judging people based on their physical appearances and about being judgmental.

* **It adds to the cuddle-time**

Yeah that one’s my favourite. I get to hold on to their childhood for a bit longer. I know I know and I’m trying not to be that clingy mum but I cannot help but enjoy this bit of their extended childhood.