

Reading for Pleasure – the Facts

“Ask any teacher and they will tell you: a reading child is, quite simply, a successful child” – Alan Gibbons, children’s author and educational consultant.

Research from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2002) showed that reading enjoyment is more important for children’s educational success than their family’s socio-economic status. There is also evidence that reading for pleasure not only impacts on reading achievement but also increases:

- general knowledge (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998);
- a better understanding of other cultures (Meek, 1991);
- community participation (Bus, van Ijzendoorn and Pellegrini, 1995);
- a greater insight into human nature and decision-making (Bruner, 1996)

Parental involvement in their child’s literacy practices is a more powerful force than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education (Flouri and Buchanan, 2004)

Baumann and Duffy (1997) highlighted the following five factors that help children become readers:

1. *A print-rich environment*
2. *A language-rich environment*
3. *A knowledge-rich environment*
4. *A nurturing environment*
5. *An environment with good home-school connections*

Children whose home experiences promote the view that reading is a source of entertainment are likely to become intrinsically motivated to read (Baker, Serpell and Sonnenschein, 1995)

Children are more likely to continue to be readers in homes where books and reading are valued (Baker and Scher, 2002).