

# Reading and Writing Tips

*By Diane Trautman*

In my tutoring business, I receive many requests for assistance with mathematics and science subjects, but I often suspect that part of the problem students come across with those studies are related to their reading and writing abilities. For instance, the inability to solve word problems in math may be attributed to lack of reading comprehension.

Reading and writing skills are essential to our success in higher-level subjects and throughout our lives. We can help our children learn to read and write and find joy in the processes, by making it a natural part of our lives.

The upcoming holidays provide us with a variety of opportunities to encourage literacy. We can begin by spending some cozy time reading books together or even watching a beloved holiday movie and muting the sound during commercial breaks to discuss the story line, characters, and settings.

Children can help us by writing down shopping lists, reading recipes and baking instructions, and creating bookmarks to give as gifts. We can get bookstore gift certificates for them or take them to the library each week to check out a book of their choice.

Companion books that accompany taped readings can offer a little extra help for those students that need it. Books that instruct on the use of companion materials, such as juggling balls, modeling plaster, or building components give kids the experience of following directions for a desired outcome.

If your child is old enough to construct a sentence, you might have him write a brief message in your holiday cards or letters. Sing songs of the season and talk about their meanings.

We learn language from the people around us, so talking to our children, even before they can speak, is an important part of their language training. Surrounding our kids with books and other reading materials and regularly engaging them in meaningful conversation will support their efforts throughout their education. And, of course, if we too read and write regularly, they will understand the value and importance of language skills in their lives.

We wish you all a warm and happy holiday season!

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