

How much time should my child spend reading?

Question 13 from Helping Your Child Become a Reader
(Scanlon, Anderson, Barnes, Morse, & Yurkewecz-Stellato, 2024¹)

Once they have begun to learn to read, it is often recommended that children spend 15 or 20 minutes reading each day (in addition to the reading they do at school). However, the *amount* of reading children do is most important, not the amount of time they spend doing it. So, if a child spends 20 minutes reading a book that is very challenging, the child will read less, in terms of the total number of words read, than if the same 20 minutes are spent reading easier text.

While 15 to 20 minutes is often the recommended amount of reading time, if children are interested in and enjoying what they are reading, it is fine to encourage/allow more time. However, we do not want children to become too tired. It can take readers many months of practice to build up the stamina they need to read for longer periods of time.

Note also that beginning readers generally benefit from reading to someone and many will not be interested in reading alone. Finding time to listen to children read every day is important. Also, especially when children are first learning to read, reading will take energy and concentration. Therefore, it will be helpful to find a time when the child is not too tired and is in a place where reading can be done without too many distractions (such as the TV or other conversations).



However, it is not necessary to be sitting right next to children while they read. You can ask them to read to you while you are driving, folding laundry, preparing meals, etc. If children need help with a word, they can simply spell the word out for you. Doing so actually has the potential to help them learn to identify the word more readily in the future because they have looked at and thought about all the letters in the word.

¹ The complete 23 question booklet can be accessed at: eltep.org/isa-parent-booklet
All individual questions and the complete booklet can be shared for non-commercial purposes.