

### PRIORITIZE DAILY READ ALOUDS



Reading aloud is *one of the most effective* brain building activities we can do with our students. Research shows that reading aloud improves a child's intelligence, language, comprehension, creativity, and empathy. The best news? It's free. It's easy to do. And our students love it. Here's the research that shows why you should set aside a block of precious time and make reading aloud a priority in your daily routine.

While this seems obvious, it bears repeating: When you read aloud, you are modeling positive reading habits. You are sending the message that reading is important and engaging. And you are introducing students to a variety of genres, characters, and topics they may be interested in for independent reading. **You are building a lifelong love of reading.**

### TURBOCHARGE LANGUAGE & COMPREHENSION

Brain scans show visual and language areas of the brain light up like fireworks when children listen to a read aloud. Reading aloud builds a larger vocabulary because children encounter more complex vocabulary than in adult to child speech. Research shows that if a child hears two picture books read aloud per day, they would be exposed to more than 438,000 unique words per year.

Students not only hear new vocabulary, they hear syntax – how complex sentences are put together in ways more complex than everyday speech. And all the while, you are building their background knowledge, which we know is required for reading comprehension. Plus, reading aloud isn't just for young children. Reading books to middle school students that are beyond their independent reading level increases reading comprehension.



### BUILD A BIGGER BRAIN FOR LIFE

Reading aloud physically changes the shape of a child's brain - permanently. Not only does it strengthen neural connections, it increases brain volume and thickness. Reading aloud builds bigger brains!

Furthermore, the benefits of building stronger brains in childhood have been shown to result in better cognitive function in *old age*. That means choosing to read aloud to your students today will benefit them for a lifetime.

## STRENGTHEN SEL



Reading aloud not only helps your students intellectually, but it also builds their social and emotional skills. Research shows that as little as two weeks of reading aloud books that model empathy and creativity improve those skills in young children.

Do your students seem stressed out? Research shows that reading aloud increases oxytocin and positive emotions *plus* decreases cortisol and pain. If reading aloud can help hospitalized children feel better, imagine what it can do for your students.

And last but not least, reading aloud can be a life raft in your day. It gives you a minute to pause, catch your breath, and enjoy a shared experience with your students.

## INTRODUCE POSSIBILITIES

Some of our students have rich and varied experiences outside our classroom walls. Others do not. Picture books can serve to level the playing field by putting a world of information at the fingertips of all our students.

Imagine reading aloud a picture book biography a day. You would be sharing 180 careers with your students in a single school year! Beyond career possibilities, picture books hold up mirrors so students can see themselves reflected back. Other books provide windows so students can imagine and empathize with the lives of others.

Books take students beyond your classroom walls into the realm of possibility.



## RECLAIM TRANSITION TIME

First thing in the morning, after lunch, after recess, or anytime you are transitioning between activities is the perfect time for a read aloud. Make a goal for one short reading session or picture book per day (outside of your ELA curriculum), work up to three, and **protect that time**.

Because reading aloud is essential to for healthy child development, we need to share this research-based practice with parents, caregivers, and community partners. In addition to this *Round Up*, here are additional resources that can help:

[Reading Rockets: Reading with Your Child](#)

[Read Aloud.org Library of Printable Resources](#)

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Scan the QR code to learn about Emily's science and reading resources for educators and authors.



## RESEARCH STUDIES REFERENCED

If you received a printed copy of the Read Aloud Research Round Up, below are the full addresses of the resources at the bottom of page two. These are followed by the research studies linked throughout the online .pdf ( listed in order of appearance).

 Reading Rockets: <https://www.readingrockets.org/literacy-home/reading-your-child>

 Read Aloud.org: <https://www.readaloud.org/downloads.html>

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