



The Learning Clinic

Education & Career Development Agency

But words are things, and a small drop of ink, Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think...
— Lord Byron

An aim in life is the only fortune worth the finding; and it is not to be found in foreign lands, but in the heart itself.
— Robert Louis Stevenson

All progress depends on the unreasonable man.
— George Bernard Shaw

To know just what has to be done, then to do it, comprises the whole philosophy of practical life.
— Sir William Osler

When I am anxious it is because I am living in the future. When I am depressed it is because I am living in the past.
— Unknown

The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream...It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim is sin.
— Benjamin Elijah Mays



READING IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN JK

REFLECTIONS by...

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A young mother who we will call Jennifer (not her real name) came to my office the other day and started the conversation with the following: “My three-year old daughter will be starting Junior Kindergarten next September. I would like to make sure that she has a good start. Can you help me?”



I would like to share my response to Jennifer with other parents who may be facing similar concerns with their own sons or daughters.

My advice to you, Jennifer, can be summed up in one single word...READ.

That's right. Start buying as many books as you can for your daughter, especially books that are about subjects in which she is interested. My own granddaughter is interested in princess stories, so I am starting to buy up every book I can find that is geared to pre-school children on princesses and fairies. I would suggest you do the same for your daughter.

While it won't come as much of a surprise to most of us in the education field, there are now studies done that confirm the fact that North American youth in Canada and the United States are spending less time reading for fun in their free time than the previous generation. Experts may differ on what must be done to encourage reading and to instill more positive reading habits among young people, but they all agree that this decline in the “love of reading” by our young people will have a serious affect on not only their academic performance and career prospects, but will also present challenges to them as they attempt to

take up their place in society.

Education Week Newspaper published a report released by the National Endowment for the Arts, a United States based organization, which indicated that increased use of electronic media is the greatest cause of the decline in reading for pleasure among young people. The report also stated that the efforts of school systems to improve functional reading skills in curriculum subject areas among young students is not resulting in a “lifelong love of reading” and this is leading not only to less time reading for enjoyment, but also to the loss of reading-comprehension skills.

The study found that less than 25% of all 17 year olds read every day for fun, and young people between the ages of 15 and 24 read an average of ten (10) minutes or less per day on articles and books that are not required reading for school or work. This age group prefers to watch television, listen to music or spend time on the internet or cell phones.

The report also found that there is a strong correlation between reading for fun and success in school and the workplace. The more time people spend reading for enjoyment, the more successful they are in school and in their careers.

“People who read outside of school or work volunteer at twice the rate of those who don’t, they are three times more likely to participate in the arts, they earn higher wages, they are twice as likely to exercise, they vote at one and a half times the level of people who don’t read,” stated Mr. Gioia, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “Among people who read, there is not merely a cultural transformation going on, but the habit of reading does seem to awaken something in the individual.”

In another study of 36,000 school children from the Canada and Great Britain, it was found that the most important predictors of academic success of children by the junior grades are the early reading and math skills that these children bring with them to Junior or Senior Kindergarten.

Therefore, Jennifer, if you can instill a love of reading in your daughter before she enters Junior Kindergarten, there is a very good chance that she will maintain that passion for the rest of her life. She will likely retain a positive attitude towards school itself simply because she has a better than average chance of being successful as a result of her love of reading.

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