In This Packet you will find:

**The Reading Plan Steps…** (pg 2) Quick reference list of the five steps

**The Reading Plan Explained…** (pgs 3-5) Your guide to the reading plan. This is the same thing I have on the website, but you can print this document in case you prefer to read it on paper, making notes, and highlighting.

**Home Reading Workshop Guide** …(pgs 6-8) Explanation of how to hold your own Home Reading Workshops

**Reading Profile Questionnaire…** (pgs 9-10) Print one for each child. Print one for yourself too if you want to develop your taste in books.

**Chart of the Three Types of Books…** (Pg 11) This is a reference chart to help you explain candy books, substance books, and veggie books to your kids. Feel free to print one per child to paste in their reading journal, or just print one to display where kids can see and reference it.

**Home Reading Workshop Rules** **and Agenda…** (Pg 12) I suggest you display this during your Home Reading Workshop so kids know what to expect.

**Statistics…** (pg 13) Feel free to print this list and hang it where your kids can see it often. Or use it when you do *step one* of the reading plan (teaching kids the stats.) If kids understand *why* reading is so important, they are more likely to make reading a priority.

Five Steps to Raising Devoted Readers

Helping Kids Read Better Books, for Longer, with More Joy

**Step One**

*Get to know the statistics regarding reading, and teach them to your kids.*

**Step Two**

*Teach your kids about the three categories of books, (candy substance and veggie,) and help them understand the importance of all three.*

**Step Three**

*Create a Reading Profile for your child, then create a quality book buffet for them to choose from*

**Step Four**

*Stock up on books for your book buffet.*

**Step Five**

*Set aside Reading Time. Thirty minutes a day minimum, OR an hour-long reading workshop if possible.*

The Five Steps Explained

**Step One**

*Get to know the statistics regarding reading, and show them to your kids.* (Stats are on pg 14 of this packet)

Discuss with your kids WHY these stats are true. Why does reading (particularly reading for pleasure) matter so much? You might not know all the reasons why, but it definitely makes for a good discussion.

**Step Two**

*Teach your kids about the three categories of books, and help them understand the importance of all three.*

I named these categories (based on Leslie Funkhouser’s method) so that my kids could easily understand them and relate what they know about food to what they know about books.

**Candy Books**

These books are easy, leisurely reads. We all need a few candy books in our lives, but we need to be careful to push outside of the comforts of candy. These books often have lazy writing, watery plots, convenient endings, hollow characters, and crude or oversimplified emotion. Many books that are written with characters from popular tv shows or movies for this category, as do comic books and Guinness Books of World Records. The publisher knows they will sell, so why bother with “nutrients?” (Our family loves Guinness Books of World Records, by the way. But if it was all my kids read, they would sure be missing out.)

**Substance Books**

Most of what we read should be from this category. These books are both comfortable and nourishing. They have tight and descriptive writing, complicated plots, thought-provoking conflicts, creative endings, relatable characters, and insights that cause toy to think and want to discuss. Substance books can also be nonfiction titles that teach and inspire. The more substance books kids read, the more they will recognize the difference between these books and the candy books they used to grab for. (Yes, picture books can be substance books. Mo Willems, Eric Carle, and Kevin Henkes books are example of simple picture books that are brilliantly written, even if they do get annoying to read day after day. Other substance examples include Newberry and other award winners, biographies, poems, classic fairy tales and fables.

**Veggie Books**

These are a little harder to swallow, but we still need a few of them in our lives. Just like carrots go down better with ranch dressing, veggie books might need a little assistance to help kids get through them. Kids might require help from a dictionary or parent to understand certain words or phrases from veggie books. Some of the concepts will be too hard to grasp on their own. It could also be helpful to listen to an audiobook version of read aloud at a slower pace to help with comprehension. If kids are forced to endure too many of these books, they will feel frustrated and it will begin to poison their love of reading. Make sure to praise kids when they read veggie books, reminding them that if they will keep reading and practicing, someday these books won’t seem so tough. Reading is like any skill worth having. It takes practice, and it becomes more fun the better you get!

**Step Three**

*Create a Reading Profile for your child then create a quality book buffet for them to choose from.*

This is the hardest step, but in my opinion it’s also the most important one. Your job is to get to know your child’s book cravings and then create a healthy buffet of book options for your child to choose from. If you let kids choose anything the library throws at them, they might end up loading their minds with bathroom humor and sloppy writing when they could be growing their brains and enriching their imaginations. But, if you try to force-feed quality books to your kids, they can lose interest and rebel rather than revere what they’re reading.

The goal is to provide a good array of options, encouraging small bites until your kids are ready to dig in. If they are struggling with a book, find out why (Is it too hard? Too boring? Too easy?), and then use those clues to help them select a better option.

It will require time and effort to create this book buffet and keep it stocked. Nancie Atwell (author, and award winning teacher) says she likes to keep a classroom library with 20 books per student at all times. This way, when a child abandons a book, there are plenty of back-up options. 20 books per child is a lot! Too many for me to manage, I think. My goal for now is 5 chapter books at a time for each child to choose from. (10 books for my six year old since his books are so short and he breezes through them. He is reading a mix of easy chapter books and picture books.)

Sometimes its obvious what your child prefers to read, but sometimes they need help finding their favorites. (Atwell says that boys in particular need help choosing good books.)

Start by having your child/children take this questionnaire and then discuss the responses together. (Most kids are able to fill out the questionnaire by around 2nd grade. Help them fill it out if needed, and then have your children re-fill it out each year.)

To choose selections for your book buffets:

- Consider the questionnaire your child filled out.

- Talk to the librarian or your child’s schoolteacher for book suggestions.

- Check your library website. They often have lists of book suggestions by genre, age, etc.

- Look for award winners like Newberry Medal, ALA Top Ten Best Books, *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year, *Kirkus Review* Editor’s Choice, or starred reviews in *Booklist, The Horn Book, or Publishers Weekly.*

*-* Look into selections from NPR’s Morning Edition Book Club.

- After your kids finish a book, have them rate it and tell you how they felt about it. Their responses will be your best clues in helping select new options for their book buffet. Read reviews on amazon.com and goodreads.com, looking for books that are similar to other books your child enjoyed.

Try to stretch your kids and introduce them to lots of genres. Give graphic novels a try or hit the nonfiction section. Youth nonfiction books are full of rich illustrations and photographs where kids can learn about everything from cooking to foreign countries to real pirates to guinea pigs. Also look into, poems, biographies, etc.

Letting kids choose their own books is a hot topic, and it’s something I’ve thought a lot about. To read more about my thoughts along with what the experts are saying, check out my article about *book* *choice*. (coming soon)

**Step Four –** *Stock up on books for your book buffet.*

Once you have your list of ten books per child, place the books on hold at the library and the magical library fairies will have them waiting for you to pick up. (Don't you just love the library? It's one of those things that is easy to take for granted.)

In the old days before I started intentionally building book buffets for my kids, we could easily spend an hour at the library and come home with zero substance books. While I know that exploring the library is important and fun, I’ve learned that choosing books in advance and placing them on hold is a much better way to use the library. Sure, the kids still browse the library and pick out a few books of their own. I have no problem with them rounding out their book diets with some candy books.

If you’re looking to buy books for your home collection, check out your local library book sale or try a 2nd hand book shop. Taking kids to buy some bargain books of their very own is a great way to get them excited about reading.

**Step Five –** *Set aside Reading Time. Thirty minutes a day minimum, OR an hour-long Home Reading Workshop if possible.*

Now that you have your book buffets and everyone knows why reading is so fantastic, let’s get to the best part—*reading*. Reading for thirty minutes a day is a great goal, but if you really want to boost the love of reading in your home, try a Home Reading Workshop. It takes an hour, and it will be worth every minute.

Home Reading Workshop

Here’s how a Home Reading workshop works in our family:

Book Talk 10 min

Read aloud 15 min

Silent Read 30 min

5-10 min – Write in reading journal OR continue reading

**Book Talk** (10 min) –This is just an optional time to casually and socially discuss the joy of reading. Sometimes we skip this part, and sometimes we stretch it to 20 minutes depending on the day. Just take turns each day and make sure everyone gets a chance to join in the book talks. Options for book talks are:

*Reading Smarts*: This is when I share cool facts and insights about reading. Show your kids any new statistics, ideas, or reading strategies you learn about.

*Show and Tell:* Let kids take the spotlight for a few minutes and share something exciting from a book they are reading. Or let them share something they wrote themselves, like a poem or story.

*Book teasers:* These can be given by you or your kids. A book teaser is where you give a mini review about a book you enjoyed or a new book that you think looks interesting.

If you’ve read the book, you can rate it and describe it. Kids should regularly give book teasers and share their opinion on what books they’re reading. It’s important for kids to become invested readers who form opinions about authors, plots, writing styles, genres, etc. Knowing about these things and having the chance to talk about them is what makes kids feel excited about reading.

If you’re giving a book teaser about a book you haven’t read yet, just explain why it appeals to you. (Perhaps you like the author, the back descriptions sounds amazing, it won an award, etc.)

The goal is to get your kids energized about the books that are presented so they will want to read them. Book teasers should be about 3 minutes long, giving time for multiple people to share their book thoughts each day.

**Read Aloud** (15 min) – I choose a novel that is of interest to all the boys, and read to them for fifteen minutes. The book we just started was *How to Eat Fried Worms.*

Want to know why we read aloud? There are many reasons, but here are a few:

Kids read less the older they get. This fact has been shown again and again on literacy studies. And interestingly, the very age that most kids stop *reading for pleasure* is the same age that most kids *stop being read to*. Author Jim Trelease says, “By middle school, almost no one is reading to [their kids anymore.]” This could explain why the joy of reading starts to fade for kids.

Trelease goes on to explain that, “Human beings are pleasure-centered. This means we choose to eat the foods we like, listen to the music we like, and visit the friends we like. Conversely, we avoid the food, music, and people we dislike. Far from being a theory, this is a physiological fact. We approach what causes pleasure, and we withdraw from what causes displeasure or pain. Every time you read to a child, you’re sending a “pleasure” message to the child’s brain, conditioning it to associate books and print with pleasure.”

Another great reason to read aloud to kids is that it helps them absorb more challenging books. When kids are read to, they can comprehend books that are 2 grade levels higher than books they read silently. So while it’s important for kids to master the skill of reading independently, reading aloud gives them a chance to experience books with greater depth. And, they have a grownup there to help them when they come across words or concepts that are beyond their comprehension.

**Silent Reading** (30 min) **–** This is when the magic happens. The room must be quiet and free from distraction. If you have younger kids who are not reading on their own yet, take them in another room and read to them or play quietly so the older kids can have a quiet space to lose themselves in their books.

If you *don’t* have younger children calling for your attention, this is your time to read along with your older kids! Grab a book and get lost in the pages. It’s so good for kids to see you enjoying a book.

Kids will often gasp or call for my attention when something exciting happens in their books. I give a big thumbs up and mouth, “wow!” then we return to our books, waiting to share the details of our stories until silent reading time is over.

**Journal or continued reading –** For the last 5-10 minutes, the kids can continue reading if they want. Or, they can choose to write in their reading journal. Reading journals should have at least three sections.

Section1: A list of books your child finished reading. Have them rate the books they read. (1-5 stars) Also have them list books they tried but abandoned. This will help you keep track of what books *are* and *are* *not* working for your child.

Section 2: A list of books your child wants to read in the future.

Section 3: Open space for your child to write. They can write predictions for what they think will happen next in their book. They can write a book review about a book they finished. They can even choose to write creatively, developing their own story or characters. Or, they can just journal about life.

Be Prepared—When reading time is over and the books go back on the shelf, expect some great discussions. After you’ve lost yourself in a book for thirty minutes, it’s exciting to share your adventures with others and hear about the adventures they had in their reading.

**Reading Workshop Rules – I printed these rules and I always display them during our reading time.**

1. Shhh! Keep it quiet so everyone can enjoy their reading adventure.
2. Give books a fair try – read at least three chapters before abandoning a book.
3. Please don’t ask when the time is up. Don’t worry about time or anything else—just let yourself melt into the reading zone.
4. Feel free to choose from substance books or veggie books during reading workshop. Candy books can be read later. (Read more about candy, substance, and veggie books here.)

**We just finished our first week doing these five steps, and I’ll be honest—**it was a rough start. Despite all my efforts to be prepared and make the experience positive, my kids really rebelled for the first few days. But I stood firm, and by day three things were already going better. My kids are cruising through some great books and getting excited to contribute to the book talks next week.

Check in at kirstenjoyhobbs.com and let me know how the Home Reading Workshop works for your family!

Reading Profile Questionnaire

Name Date

What are three books you loved reading?

1

2

3

What are three books you didn’t like or didn’t finish?

1

2

3

Do you have any favorite authors?

1

2

3

What books have you heard friends or teachers talk about that sound interesting?

1

2

3

Are there any people you want to learn more about? (famous athletes, magicians, political leaders, performers, musicians, authors, film makers, etc.)

**Circle the genres that sound interesting:**

Nonfiction – what topics?

Historical fiction

Humor

Animals

Mystery

Action and Adventure

Friendship

Coming of Age

Romance

Sports

Baking and food

Fables

Poems

Greek mythology

Paranormal – This doesn’t just mean ghosts. Harry potter is in this category along with

mermaids, vampires, magic, etc.

**Circle the historical events you are interested in**

Pioneers

War

Ancient civilizations – Which ones?

Tragedies (like titanic sinking, earthquakes, fires, holocaust)

**How do you feel about reading and about yourself as a reader**? (write on the back if needed)

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| Three Types of Books  **Candy Books**  These books are easy, leisurely reads. We all need a few candy books in our lives, but we need to push outside the comforts of candy if we want to become stronger readers. These books often have lazy writing, watery plots, convenient endings, hollow characters, and crude humor. Have fun with a few candy books, but don’t be afraid to push yourself into more challenging books. You’ll be amazed what you can do.  **Substance Books**  Most of what we read should be from this category. These books are both comfortable and nourishing. They have tight and descriptive writing, complicated plots, thought-provoking conflicts, creative endings, relatable characters, and insights that cause you to think. It’s really fun to discuss these books with others and share your opinions. The more substance books you read, the more you will recognize the difference between these books and the candy books you used to grab for.  **Veggie Books**  These books are a little harder to swallow, but we still need a few of them in our lives. Just like carrots go down better with ranch dressing, veggie books might require a little assistance for you to understand them. Use a dictionary or ask a parent when you are confused, or try listening on an audiobook to make understanding easier.  Then pat yourself on the back! You are doing something hard, which means your brain is growing and your confidence will grow too. If you keep reading and practicing, someday these books won’t seem so tough. |

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| Reading Workshop Rules   1. Shhh! Keep it quiet so everyone can enjoy their reading adventure. 2. Give books a fair try – read at least three chapters before abandoning a book 3. Please don’t ask when the time is up. Don’t worry about time or anything else—just let yourself melt into the reading zone. 4. Feel free to choose from substance books or veggie books during reading workshop. Candy books can be read later. |

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| Reading Workshop Agenda  Book Talk 10 min  Read aloud 15 min  Silent Read 30 min  5-10 min – Write in reading journal OR continue reading |

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| --- |
| Statistics about Reading  The Scary Stats   * As of 2011, America was the only free-market country where the current generation was less educated than the previous one. * A person with poor literacy is more likely to live in a non-working household, live in overcrowded housing, and is less likely to vote. * Nearly 85% of the juveniles who face trial in the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate, proving that there is a close relationship between illiteracy and crime. More than 60% of all inmates are functionally illiterate. * Kids today are reading at **three grade levels below** what kids were reading one-hundred years ago.   The Exciting Stats   * Reading a quality novel improves a person’s ability to feel emotion and relate to others. Neuroscience researchers found that “becoming engrossed in a novel enhances connectivity in the brain and improves brain function, improving the reader's ability to put themselves in another person’s shoes and flex the imagination.” (Bergland) * Students who do more reading at home have higher math scores. * Reading for pleasure is *more* important for children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education. * Reading for pleasure is more important than either wealth or social class as an indicator of success at school.     The Stats About the Role of Parent or Guardian   * Parents are the most important reading role models for children and young people. Sadly, 25% of adults read zero books last year. * For every year you read with your child, average lifetime earnings increase by $50,000. By the time your child starts kindergarten, you make a $250,000 gift to your child by reading aloud just 20 minutes a day! * Fourth graders who reported having 25 books or more at home had higher scores on reading tests than children who reported they didn’t have that many books. |

Sources for the statistics  
  
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