



Reading in Your Own Back Yard



Children usually take an interest in the here and now, the events that are happening immediately and around them—a new restaurant or store that's about to open, a favorite singer coming to town, or a school policy that's under debate. The newspaper is full of interesting information about your child's community. Sharing this information is a great way to keep your child engaged in local news while also building reading skills.

Where and When.

Look for an event coming to your community that would be of interest to your child—a concert, a home or electronics exposition, a food festival, or the publication of a new book by a favorite author. Mark the day of the event on a calendar and ask your child to help you calculate how many days remain before the event. If you need to have a ticket to the event, mark on the calendar when tickets become available.



What Do You Think?

Invite your middle school or high school children to read through the editorials and op-ed pages of the newspaper, looking for differing opinions about a local issue. Ask your child where he weighs in on the subject. If he feels strongly about it, encourage him to write his own letter to the editor and send it to the paper. At the same time, look for the newspaper's guidelines about submitting articles and discuss why you think the paper has set these guidelines.

What Do They Do?

Often, newspaper articles refer to or quote from important figures in your community—a member of the school board, the mayor, the chief of police or a local business owner. Help your child identify these leaders and start a list of the people who make an impact on your community. What are their responsibilities? What are the qualifications they bring to

their positions? Maybe your child would like to write a letter to one of these leaders to ask about his or her role in the community.

