

Tips for Using the Newspaper at Home

Dealing with Sensitive News

1. **Start a discussion.** You could ask, "What do you think about that story?" "Did you understand what we just read?" or "It was terrible to read about the fire burning up that house."
2. **Be honest and reassuring while reinforcing safety messages.** If your child asks, "Could our house burn down, too?" answer truthfully, but also reassures your child that you take all the precautions to reduce such a risk. Explain to him, for example, the fire safety precautions your family takes, such as keeping fresh batteries in the smoke detectors. Show him how to use the fire extinguishers and how to get out of the house if it was burning. You could also reinforce similar safety measures about break-ins, medical emergencies, or natural disasters, while remaining reassuring.
3. **Emphasize positive aspects of a tragic event.** Whether children hear about a major gas line explosion, an earthquake, or a flood, it's important they hear about how well the public, the police, emergency medical, and fire departments respond as well. Even more important, try to emphasize the good stories that come out of every natural disaster—such as how individuals help each other in times of need. Use these stories to prepare your own home for natural disasters, to check up on your emergency supply kits, etc.
4. **Use the discussion as a teaching tool to teach values.** What may start as an uncomfortable discussion of a scandalous event can turn into an opportunity for you to teach and reinforce the values you believe are important in your home. Discussing these topics that arise from reading the newspaper also become opportunities for character building lessons. The consequences of breaking laws become real to children. They also see how our own actions often effect those we love.

Reading Tips

1. Read aloud.
2. Allow for discussion before, during and after each read-aloud period.
3. Do not "test" children on what you have read, but use the opportunity to get their opinions and to share your own.

4. Read the sections that interest you both: the comics, movie reviews, Ann Landers, the Food Section, classified ads.
5. Ask questions:
 - a. What do you think happened next?
 - b. How do you think the person in the article felt?
 - c. How does this picture make you feel?
 - d. What would you have done?

Activity Ideas

1. For very young children, spread a newspaper out on the floor and have them locate letters, number and objects. "Find a "G," "Find the number "2", "Find a red car."
2. Play 20 questions as you look at a page together: "I'm looking at a word that starts with 'B' and is in the first column." Talk about what the word means after the child finds it.
3. Use the newspaper to learn more about opposites: win/lose, rich/poor, night/day, happy/sad. Find as many opposites as you can use both words and pictures. Choose a pair of opposites like night/day and find pictures of things that happen in the daytime or at night.
4. Looking through the newspaper, ask your child to find examples items that fit a category. For example:
 - a. Foods I like
 - b. Clothes I like to wear
 - c. Toys I like to play with
 - d. Animals I like
 - e. You chose a category
5. Let your child clip coupons from the newspaper — the Sunday edition is best. Let the child group the coupons in categories like types of products, colors, or size. Can they discover a new way to group them?
6. Ask you child to cut out a picture of a famous athlete, movie star, politician, or other person he or she would like to meet. Ask, "What would you say to this person?" "What do you think this person would say to you?"
7. Encourage your child to search through the "Help Wanted" section of the classified ads. Let the child pick a job that sounds appealing and talk about the education needed to get that job.
8. Find stories from different locations in the U.S. or world. Have your child find them on a map. Talk about how you would get to each location.

9. Have your child select from the food section those items he would need to make his favorite meal. Have him cut out the pictures or coupons and make a collage.
10. Read the TV listings together. Help your child choose a program for the whole family to watch. Ask, "Why did you choose this program for the whole family?" "What show would you choose to watch by yourself?"
11. Using the newspaper's food section, choose a recipe with your child. Prepare it together, asking your child to help you read the directions. Then, serve it to family or friends.
12. Have your child choose an object pictured in the newspaper and describe it to you. See if you can correctly identify it based on your child's description.
13. Play a game with the index of the newspaper. Have your child locate each section as you call out the page numbers