

Mem Fox's Ten Read Aloud Commandments

This week we see our children heading back to school and Homereading becomes a part of every elementary student's schedule. Reading at home is equally (or even more important) for pre-school children. These kids should have listened to at least 1000 books by the time they enter kindergarten, this will set them solidly on the road to academic success.

Mem Fox, a prolific children's author from Australia, has an interesting website where you can even listen to Mem reading aloud! The site is www.memfox.com and it includes a link to her 10 Read Aloud Commandments.

1. Spend at least 10 wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud.
2. Read at least 3 stories a day: it may be the same story 3 times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they learn to read!
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.
5. Read the stories that the kids love over and over and over again, and always read in the same "tune" for each book: i.e. with the same intonations on each page, each time.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games.
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are short!
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as finding the letters that start the child's name and yours, remembering that it's never work, it's always a fabulous game.
9. Never ever teach reading, or get tense around books.
10. Read aloud every day because you just love being with your child, not because it's the right thing to do.

Family Literacy programs scheduled for the fall include the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program for children ages 0-3 and Alphabet Soup for parents and children ages 4-5. Pre-registration is necessary so please contact me:

Lizanne Eastwood - Family Literacy Coordinator for Grand Forks and the West Boundary - Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy @ 442-2533 or leastwood@thehub.literacy.bc.ca Happy Reading!