

## Australian Kids & Family Reading Report

In late 2015, Scholastic, in conjunction with YouGov, conducted a survey to explore family attitudes and behaviours in Australia around reading books for fun. The key findings of this research, based on a nationally representative sample of 1,748 parents and children, including 358 parents of children aged 0–5; 695 parents of children aged 6–17; plus one child aged 6–17 from the same household, are as follows:

### Key Findings

#### The State of Kids & Reading

- More than half of children aged 6–17 (58%) believe reading books for fun is extremely or very important and 60% of kids also say they love reading books for fun or like it a lot.
- Just over one-third of children aged 6–17 (37%) report they are frequent readers, with kids aged 6–8 being the most likely to read 5–7 days a week.
- As children grow older, reading competes with many screen-related activities, and 75% of parents with kids aged 6–17 agree: “I wish my child would do more things that did not involve screen time.”

Across ages, three-quarters of children (76%) say they know they should read more books for fun; a similar number of parents (78%) wish their child would read more books for fun.

#### Spotlight: What Makes Frequent Readers

- Frequent readers, those who read books for fun 5–7 days a week, differ substantially from infrequent readers—those who read books for fun less than one day a week. For instance, 91% of frequent readers are currently reading at least one book for fun, while 80% of infrequent readers haven’t read a book for fun in a while.
- There are three dynamics that are among the most powerful predictors of reading frequency for children aged 6–17:
  - How often a child is read books aloud
  - A child’s reading enjoyment
  - A child’s knowledge of their reading level
  - For children aged 6–11, additional predictors of reading frequency include where they read books for fun, parental involvement in encouraging reading, and how early they started being read books aloud.

For children aged 12–17, additional predictors of reading frequency include having parents who are frequent readers, the belief that reading books for fun is important, and in-school opportunities to talk about, find and read books.

#### Reading Aloud at Home

- Across ages, the overwhelming majority of kids (86%) say they love(d) being read books aloud at home or like(d) it a lot—the main reason being because it is a special time with parents.
- More than half of children aged 0–5 (57%) are read aloud to at home 5–7 days a week. This frequency declines to four in 10 kids aged 6–8 (41%), and continues to decrease with age.

Of those children aged 6–8 whose parents no longer read books aloud at home, half (51%) did not want their parents to stop.

#### Spotlight: Reading with Kids from Birth

- Nearly six in 10 parents of children aged 0–5 say they started reading books aloud to their child before age one, while only 26% say they began before the age of three months.

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Just under half of parents with children aged 0–5 (47%) received the advice that children should be read aloud to from birth, most commonly from friends and family; however, only one-quarter of parents (26%) from the lowest-income households received this advice vs. 65% in the highest-income households.

## Reading in School

- Opportunities to read independently as a class rarely happen frequently and decrease with age. One-third of children aged 6–17 (34%) say they have the opportunity to read a book of their choice independently as a class, but only 14% do so every or almost every day.
- Children aged 6–17 who are given time for independent reading at school are more likely to be reading currently and frequently, and are more likely to enjoy reading books for fun and believe it is important compared with those who are not; this is especially true for older children.
- More than two-thirds of children aged 6–17 (67%) say that at least a few times a year, their principal encourages reading books for fun, with principals providing the most frequent encouragement to kids younger than age 12.

Children whose principals encourage reading books for fun are more likely than those without encouragement from their principal to read frequently, to think reading is important, and to love reading books for fun or like it a lot.

### Spotlight: Kids' Use of Their Reading Level

- More than half of children in years 1–12 (56%) have been told their reading level in either the current or prior school year, and nearly nine in 10 of these kids (89%) have used their reading level to pick out books.

About half of children in years 1–12 (48%) say that when they use their reading level to pick books, they choose above and below their reading level in equal measure. Among kids in years 4–12, the most common reason they choose these books is because the topic interests them.

## What Kids Want in Books

- An overwhelming majority of kids aged 6–17 agree that their favourite books—and the ones they are most likely to finish—are the ones they pick out themselves.
- Above all, children aged 6–17 want books that make them laugh, and what parents want in books for children is often the same as what kids want for themselves.
- Nearly three-quarters of kids aged 6–17 (74%) say they would read more if they could find more books that they like.

Libraries, school book fairs and book club catalogues, and bookshops are the leading sources children aged 6–17 use to find books to read for fun. Parents also frequently turn to libraries and bookshops to find books for their child to read for fun, followed by the school book fair or book club catalogue.

### Spotlight: Print Books in a Digital World

- One-third of children aged 6–17 kids aged 12–17 being the most

Nearly eight in 10 children aged 6–17 want to read print books, even

Source: <http://scholastic.com.au/>



(33%) have read an ebook, with likely to have done so.

17 (79%) agree they will always

readingreport