

AUSTRALIAN PARENTS STRUGGLING WITH THE READING TEST

A Newspoll survey of Australian parents has found that almost half do not read to their children on a daily basis.

The Newspoll survey was commissioned by the Dymocks Literacy Foundation, a not for profit organization targeting children's literacy.

The Foundation is launching "Read to Your Child" which is aiming to significantly increase the numbers of parents who read aloud to their children.

Central to the campaign will be the 'TOP READS' – a special selection of children's books which have been given the 'tick of approval' by literacy experts, kids and the Dymocks Literacy Foundation. This selection is available in all Dymocks stores.

This campaign could not be more timely given the results of the Newspoll study.

The survey found that almost two thirds of Australian parents said the main reason preventing them from reading more to their child is that they didn't have enough time.

It also revealed that one in three parents of children aged between 1 and 4, read for an average of 10 minutes or less per day.

Dymocks Literacy Foundation Advisory Group Member, and renowned children's author and literacy expert Mem Fox, described the results as disturbing.

"Australian parents have admitted that they would like to spend more time reading to their children and they are worried about it" she said.

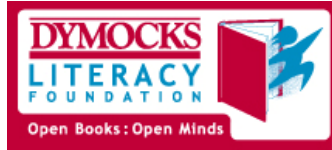
A body of international research now tells us that reading aloud to your child is the most important thing you can do for their reading success.

All children aged between 0 and 5 must be read to a minimum of 10 minutes a day, yet nearly one in three are saying they read less than this.

"Given that the ABS reports Australians on average watch 2 hours of television a day, spending less than this across an entire week reading to your child will be an investment in their future.

"This is a critical age group where we either instill a love of reading or face a generation suffering the effects of poor literacy skills including lower chance of success at school, and higher rates of unemployment and welfare dependence.

The clear message from this survey is that parents believe they simply don't have enough time to devote to reading aloud to their children."



Half of the parents who responded to the survey said they wanted to spend more time reading to their children.

With literacy emerging as a key issue facing educators and parents, pressure is coming from the children themselves with almost two thirds believing their children would like them to read even more to them.

“The fast paced lives we lead has emerged as a key factor in determining the amount of oral education in the home” said Mem Fox.

Perhaps not surprisingly one of the issues that was highlighted in the Newspoll study is that people who work full time don't do as much reading as those who work part time or don't work.

It may come as a surprise but income is not a factor in determining how important reading is.

Eighty per cent of all parents, regardless of their income, agree it is essential for parents to encourage their children to read.

However the kind of jobs people were employed in did make a difference.

Interestingly parents from some blue collar households found more time to read to their children than their white collar equivalents.

22 per cent of those in blue collar households took time out to read more than once a day, compared to 14 per cent of white collar workers.

Gender also makes a difference, women spend more time reading to their children than men.

Six in ten mothers read at least once a day to their child, compared with just 4 in ten dads.

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For more information on the campaign, visit www.dymocksliteracy.com.au