

# Education News & Notes

## Reading Aloud Benefits Older Children Too

(NAPSA)—The solution to a big problem in America's schools may be as simple as opening a book-at home.

The problem is poor reading skills. According to the U.S. Department of Education, about 40 percent of fourth graders are unable to read a paragraph from a basic children's book.

Experts believe one solution is reading aloud to children at home. Reading aloud as a family can help build reading skills and develop an appreciation for books. And it doesn't just apply to young children.

"There is a growing movement today to encourage reading aloud to children of all ages, as an activity the whole family can enjoy together," said Eunice Ellis, director of Pizza Hut's BOOK IT! reading incentive program and a former educator.

Many parents are aware that reading aloud is important to pre-readers and beginning readers. But most people find it surprising that reading aloud is beneficial into the middle-school grades, because children's reading skills don't catch up to their listening skills until about the eighth grade.

A new Pizza Hut-sponsored program, BOOK IT! Families, provides parents with read-aloud tips and resources, including a list of suggested books. Here's some advice from the experts at BOOK IT!:

- Schedule brief, daily reading sessions—just 15 to 20 minutes a day.



**Reading aloud is a valuable activity the whole family can enjoy together.**

- Vary the material. Along with books, consider newspaper and magazine essays and articles.

- Remember that younger children can listen to and appreciate material that's more advanced than what they are able to read on their own.

- Encourage family discussion and ask questions.

- Read stories geared to family interests. If your family is planning to take a trip, read about the place you'll be visiting.

- Have fun! Reading aloud is a great way for busy families to spend quality time together.

Since BOOK IT! was created in 1985, Pizza Hut has given away free pizza certificates totaling \$178 million to schoolchildren across the country as a reward for accomplishing their reading goals. Tips on starting a family routine of reading aloud can be found at [www.bookitprogram.com](http://www.bookitprogram.com).