



Kids & Family Reading Report™
AUSTRALIA



YouGov®



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A Letter from Scholastic

With the new school year now underway, the nation's schools return to serving the millions of young minds settling into their classrooms, including 300,000 pre-schoolers. As educators, parents, and as a community, we want each child to succeed, and literacy is an important key to academic achievement. Yet, we recognise the struggle to keep kids engaged with reading in a world of increasing distraction, and one in which many enter school already behind. So, what can you do to help?

To answer that question, we are thrilled to share with you the inaugural edition of Scholastic Australia's *Kids & Family Reading Report™*—a study of Australian children's and parents' attitudes and behaviours toward reading for pleasure. The study examines the significance of reading independently for fun at school, what impacts frequent reading, the importance of reading aloud to children of all ages, and the books children want most to read.

It is not a mystery that the more children read, the better readers they become, and the better readers they become, the more they enjoy reading. It's a tried-and-true premise. To that end, we asked: what makes children frequent readers? Independent reading at school, parental involvement at home, and the power of book choice are vital in this regard.

Children who are given time for independent reading at school—many of whom wish it would happen more often—are more likely to be reading currently and frequently, more likely to say reading books for fun is important, and more likely to enjoy reading, compared with those who are not. We found similar patterns among children whose principals encourage reading for fun. However, the report found only 44% of children say they have an opportunity to read independently in school as a class or school, and far fewer (16%) are given the chance to do this every or almost every school day. Having these opportunities to read in school is particularly important for older children, who are the least likely to be given the time to do so.

A powerful call to families is also found in the *Kids & Family Reading Report*. Our research shows that having parents who are reading role models is crucial for older children; for younger kids, using specific strategies such as limiting screen time and making reading a routine encourages reading books for fun. What is even more important? Read-aloud time.

Across all ages, frequently reading aloud to kids is a powerful predictor that children will become frequent readers, and kids love it. Nearly nine in 10 children say they love(d) or like(d) being read aloud to a lot, with the main reason being that it is a

special time with their parents. Among kids aged 6–8 whose parents have stopped reading aloud to them, half wish their parents had continued. And we found that you can never start early enough: while 59% of parents with children aged 0–5 years say they started reading aloud to their children before age one, only 26% say they began before the age of 3 months.

Finally, we heard loud and clear from our nation’s children that they want the power of choice. More than 90% agree that “my favourite books are the ones that I have picked out myself,” and 89% say, “I am more likely to finish reading a book that I have picked out myself.” Above all, kids want books that make them laugh, and it is encouraging to learn that many children “feel proud and have a sense of accomplishment when I finish reading a book.”

For more than 45 years, Scholastic Australia has partnered with Australian schools to help children learn to read, love to read, and find the books that inspire them. We’ve also held steadfastly to our belief that independent reading for pleasure is a critical part of a child’s learning and growth, and that we as a community can affect positive and lasting reading habits. It is our fervent hope that you find this report useful and will share the data to build a strong national movement in support of independent reading both at school and home. There are accessible actions we can all take so that we can get more kids reading, and kids reading more: provide access to books at all times; be a reading role model; read aloud; encourage independent reading; and allow children the freedom to choose books they want to read.

Finding the right book at the right time can light an emotional spark within children that motivates them to read more, understand more and read joyfully. When that happens, the world opens and everything becomes possible. We can think of no better gift, and together we can build a country of readers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Peagram', written in a cursive style.

David Peagram

Managing Director,

Scholastic Australia & New Zealand

Key Findings

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:

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. (Pages 10 & 12)
- 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. (Page 9)
- 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 screentime.” (Pages 17 & 18)
- 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. (Page 19)

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. (Page 23)
- 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 (Page 20)

- › 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. (Page 21)
- › 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. (Page 22)

Reading Aloud at Home

- › Across ages, the overwhelming majority of children (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. (Pages 26 & 27)
- › 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. (Page 31)
- › Of those children aged 6–8 whose parents no longer read books aloud at home, half (51%) did not want their parents to stop. (Page 30)

SPOTLIGHT: Reading with Kids from Birth

- › Nearly six in 10 parents of children aged 0–5 (59%) say they started reading books aloud to their child before age one, while only 26% say they began before the age of three months. (Page 32)
- › 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. (Pages 33 & 34)

Key Findings

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. (Pages 42 & 41)
- 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. (Pages 45 & 46)
- Two-thirds of children aged 6–17 (66%) 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. (Page 48)
- 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. (Page 49)

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 nine in 10 of these kids (89%) have used their reading level to pick out books. (Page 51)
- 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. (Pages 52, 53 & 54)

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. (Page 56)
- 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. (Pages 63 & 65)
- Nearly three-quarters of kids aged 6–17 (74%) say they would read more if they could find more books that they like. (Page 57)
- 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. (Pages 60 & 61)

SPOTLIGHT: Print Books in a Digital World

- One-third of children aged 6–17 (33%) have read an ebook, with kids aged 12–17 being the most likely to have done so. (Page 71)
- The majority of children aged 6–17 (79%) agree they will always want to read print books, even though there are ebooks available. (Page 76)



SECTION I:

The State of Kids & Reading

More than six in 10 children aged 6–17 (64%) say they are currently reading at least one book for fun, with younger kids being more likely to say this than older kids.

Whether Children Are Currently Reading Books for Fun

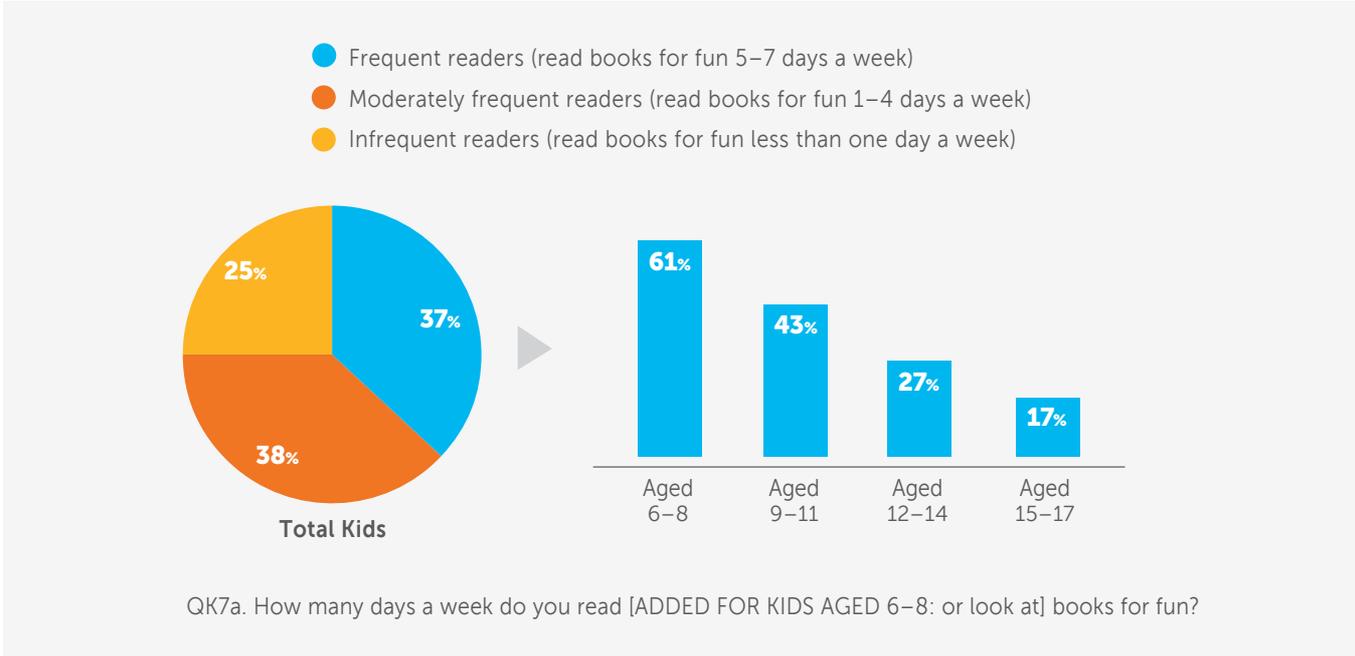
Base: Children Aged 6–17



Overall, just over one-third of children (37%) report they are frequent readers, with kids aged 6–8 being the most likely to read 5–7 days a week (61%).

Frequency with Which Children Read Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



30%
of parents with kids
aged 6–17
personally read
books for fun 5–7
days a week.

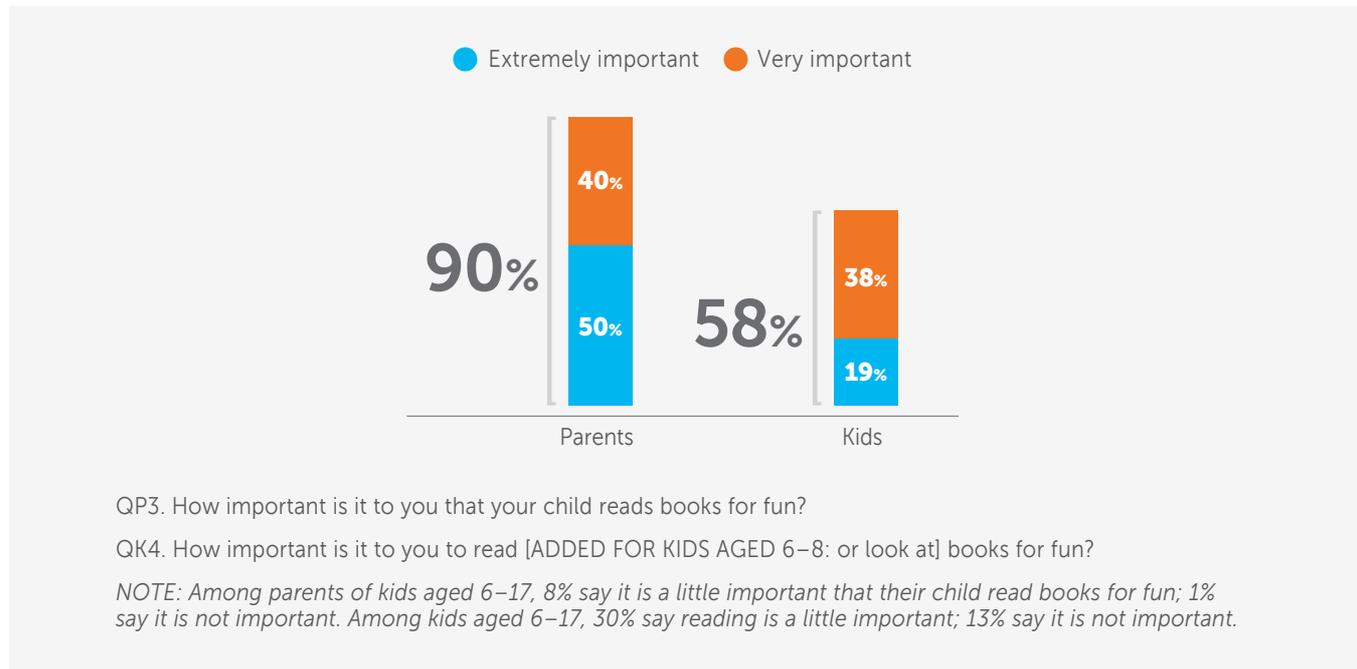
“I always enjoyed reading as a child and found it a wonderful way to use my imagination. It also helps to solve issues kids have today, depending on which books kids read.”

– Mother, 15-year-old boy,
New South Wales – Regional

While nine in 10 parents of children aged 6–17 say it is extremely or very important for their child to read books for fun, 58% of kids say the same.

Parents’ and Children’s Views on the Importance of Child Reading Books for Fun

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17 (Left) and Children Aged 6–17 (Right)



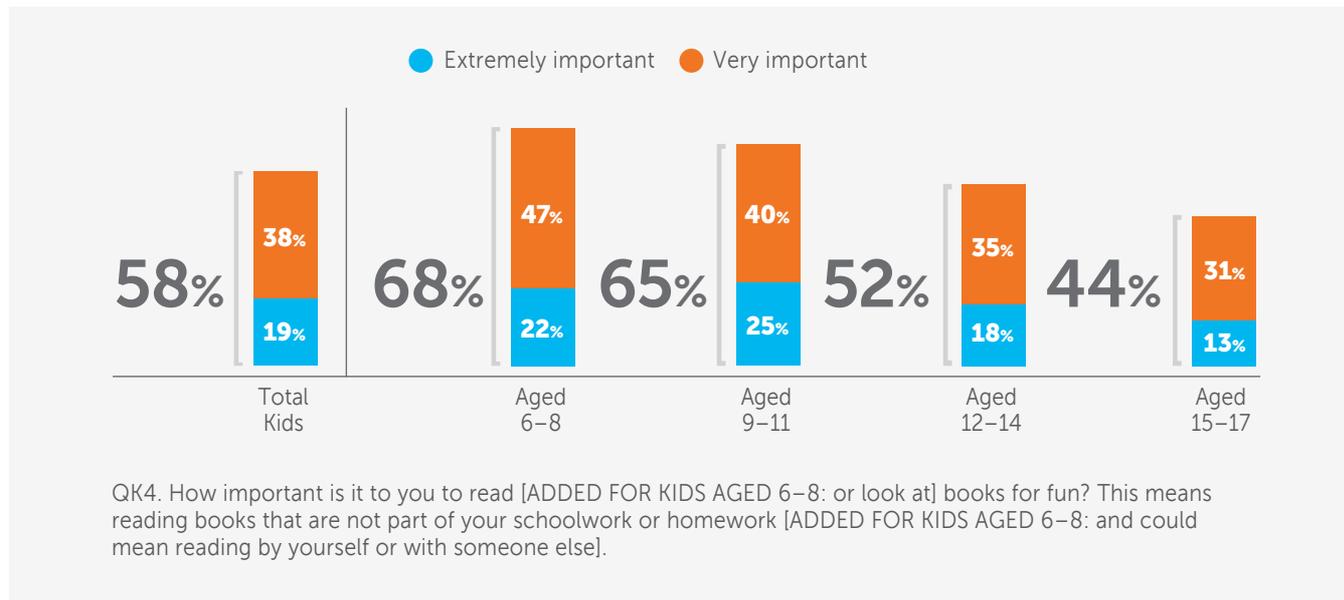
Children's views on the importance of reading books for fun declines with age.

"Reading is important because every area of life and every subject at school has reading activities."

—15-year-old girl, New South Wales – Regional

Children's Views on the Importance of Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



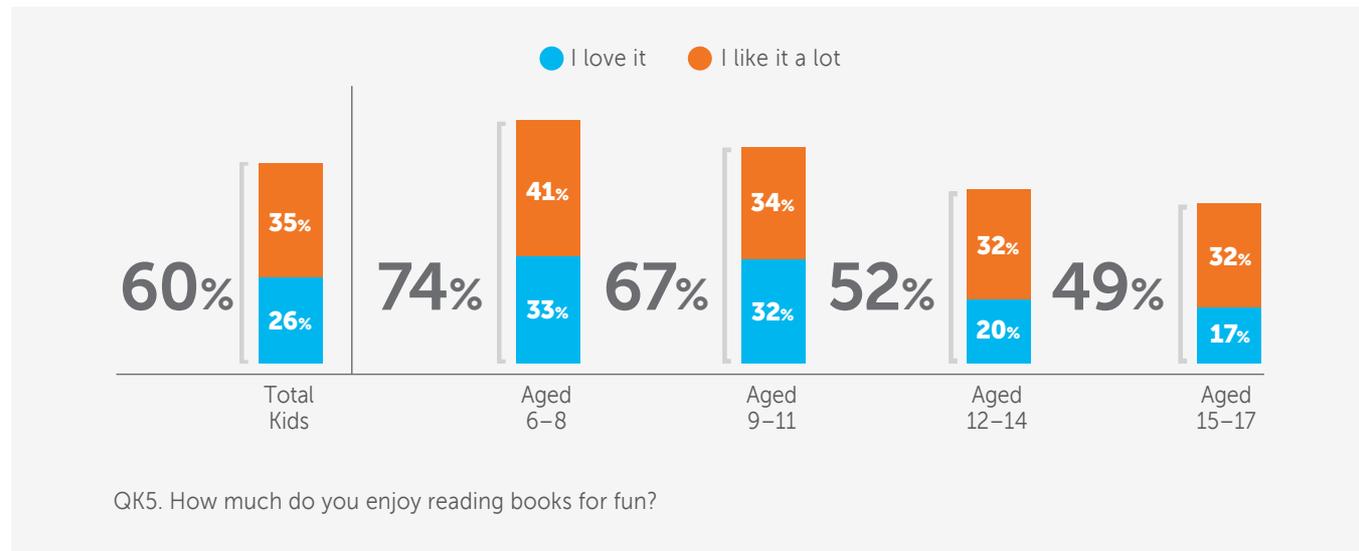
“Reading is fun and exciting. I get to use my imagination and learn new words.”

— 7-year-old boy, Victoria –
Metro

Similarly, 74% of children aged 6–8 say they love reading books for fun or like it a lot, yet this reading enjoyment decreases with age.

Degree to Which Children Enjoy Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



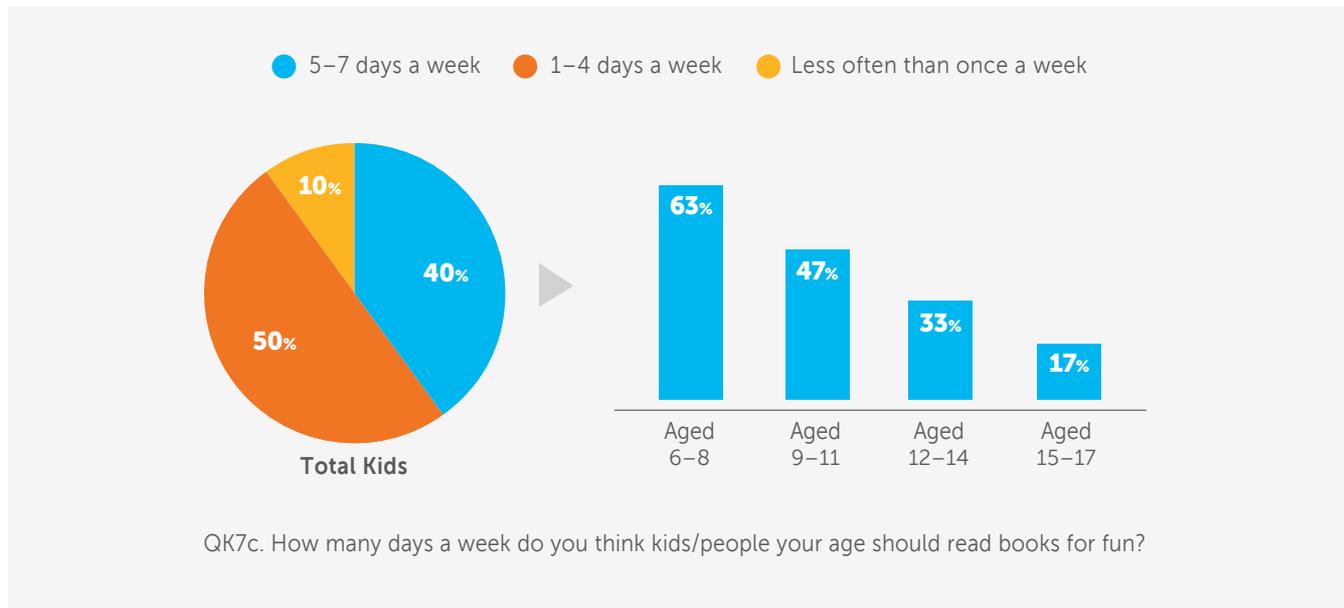
Four in 10 children (40%) think kids their age should be reading books for fun 5–7 days a week.

“I just really love it and can’t stop when I start a book, but with high school, I just don’t have as much time to do it.”

— 14-year-old girl,
Queensland – Regional

Frequency with Which Children Feel Kids Their Age Should Read Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



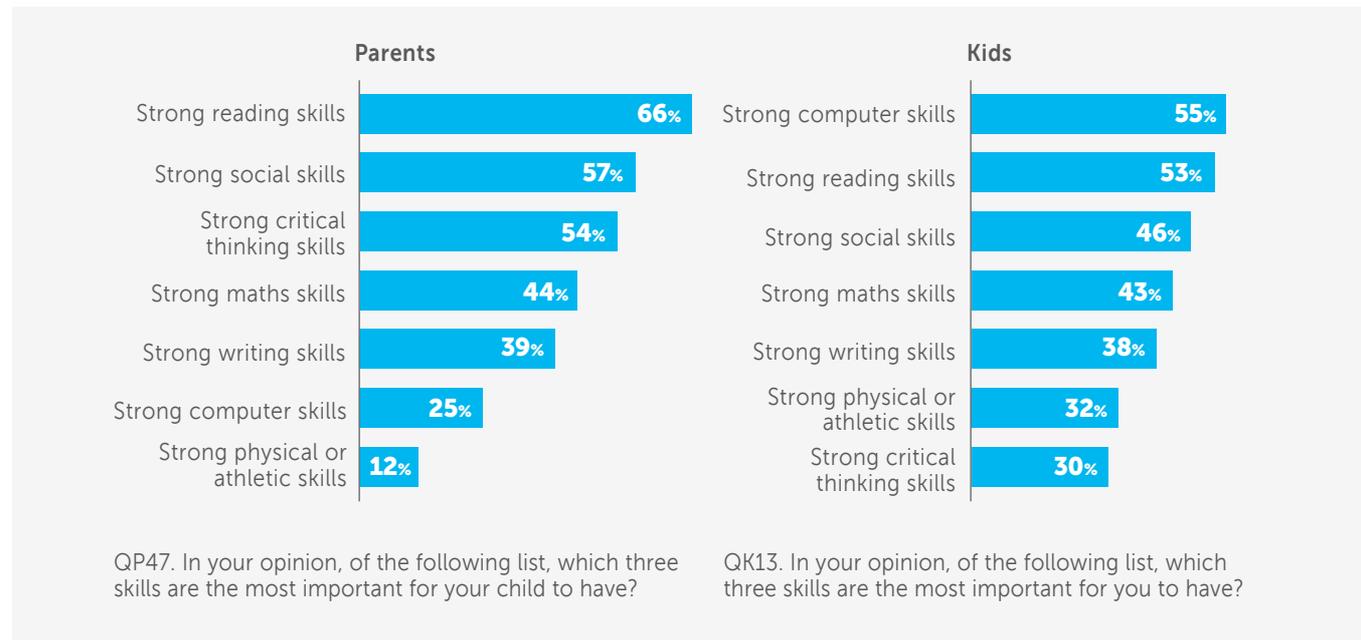
“Reading makes me feel happy and peaceful. I can imagine being the character in the book.”

— 8-year-old girl, New South Wales – Regional

Children feel strong computer and strong reading skills are among the most important skills they should have. Parents, by a fairly wide margin, perceive strong reading skills as the most important skills for their children to have.

Parents’ and Children’s Views on the Three Most Important Skills Kids Should Have

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17 (Left) and Children Aged 6–17 (Right)

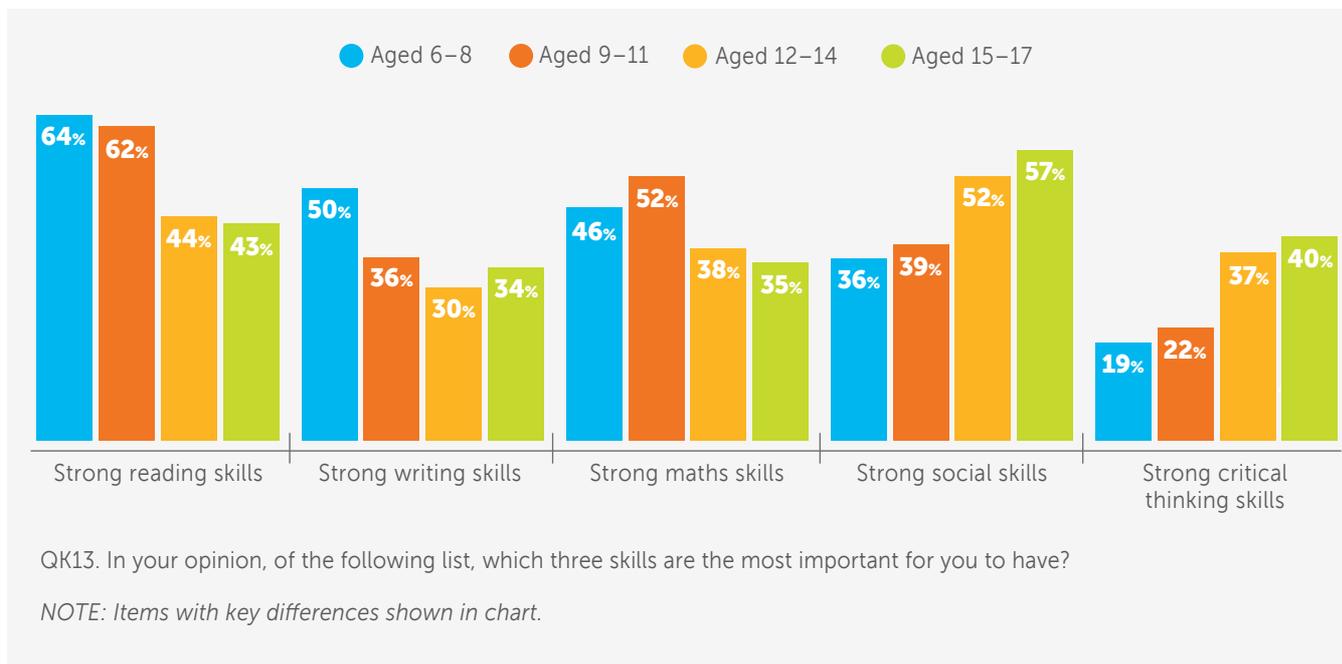


Younger children are more likely than older children to value strong reading, writing, and maths skills, while the likelihood to say strong social and critical thinking skills are important increases with age.

“You need to be able to read to have an interesting and successful life.”

— 10-year-old girl,
Queensland – Metro

Children’s Views on the Three Most Important Skills Kids Should Have
Base: Children Aged 6–17



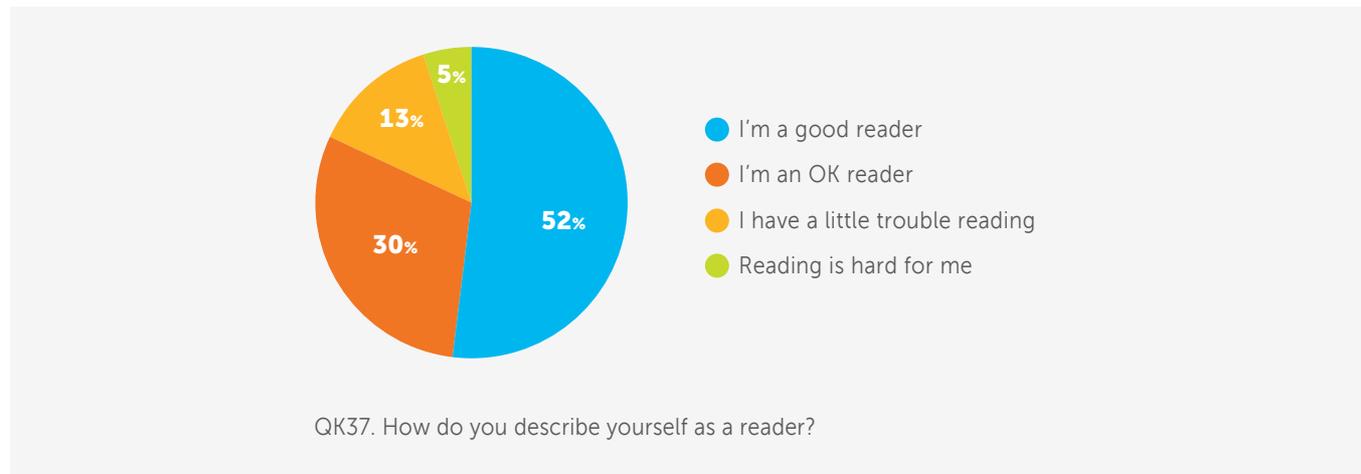
“I have always enjoyed reading and the more I read, the better my reading skills are getting.”

—16-year-old boy, Victoria —
Metro

More than half of children (52%) consider themselves good readers, while fewer than two in 10 say they have trouble reading or that reading is hard for them (17%).

How Children Describe Themselves as Readers

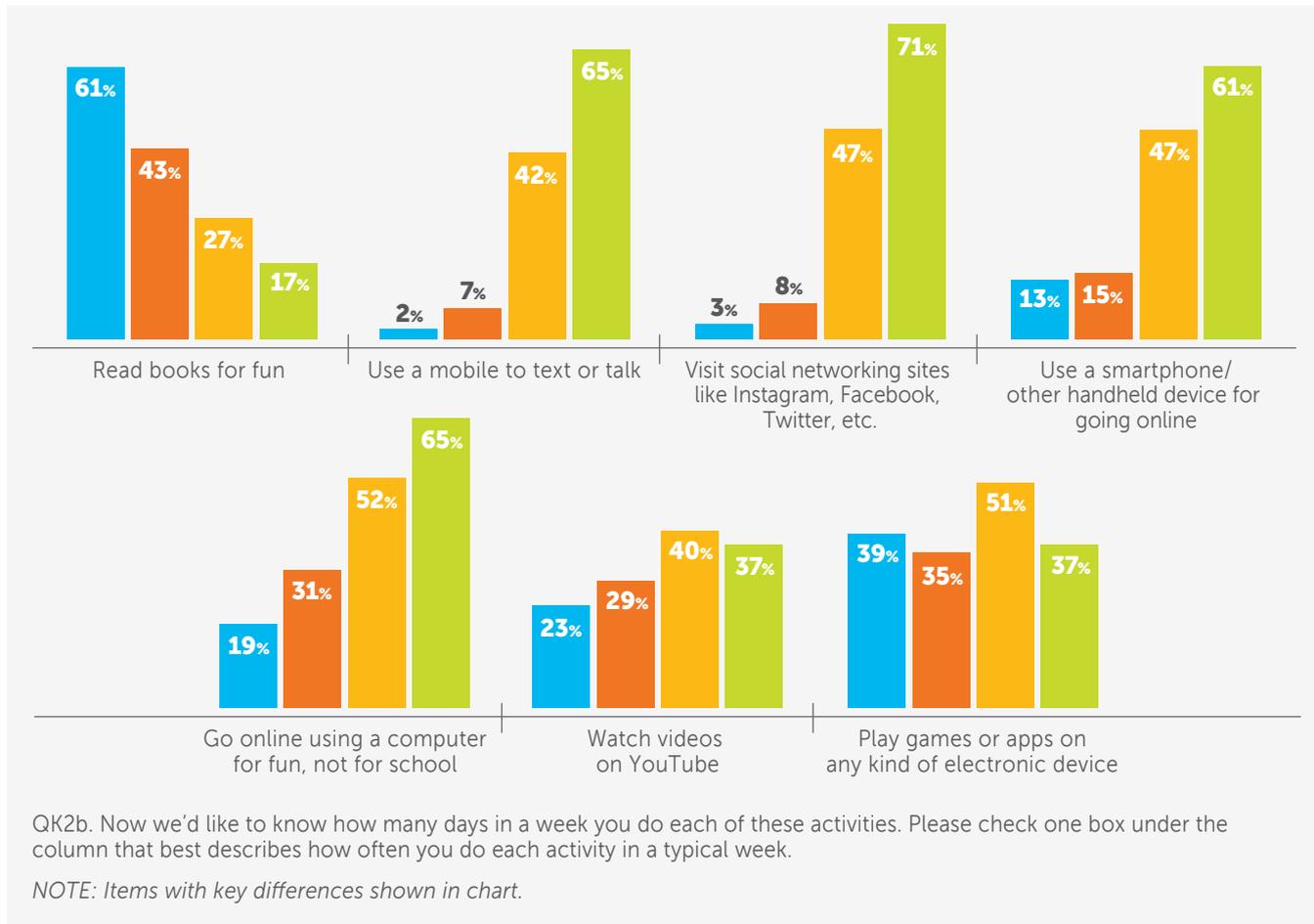
Base: Children Aged 6–17



As children grow older, reading competes with many activities.

Percentage of Children Who Do Activities 5–7 Days a Week

Base: Children Aged 6–17



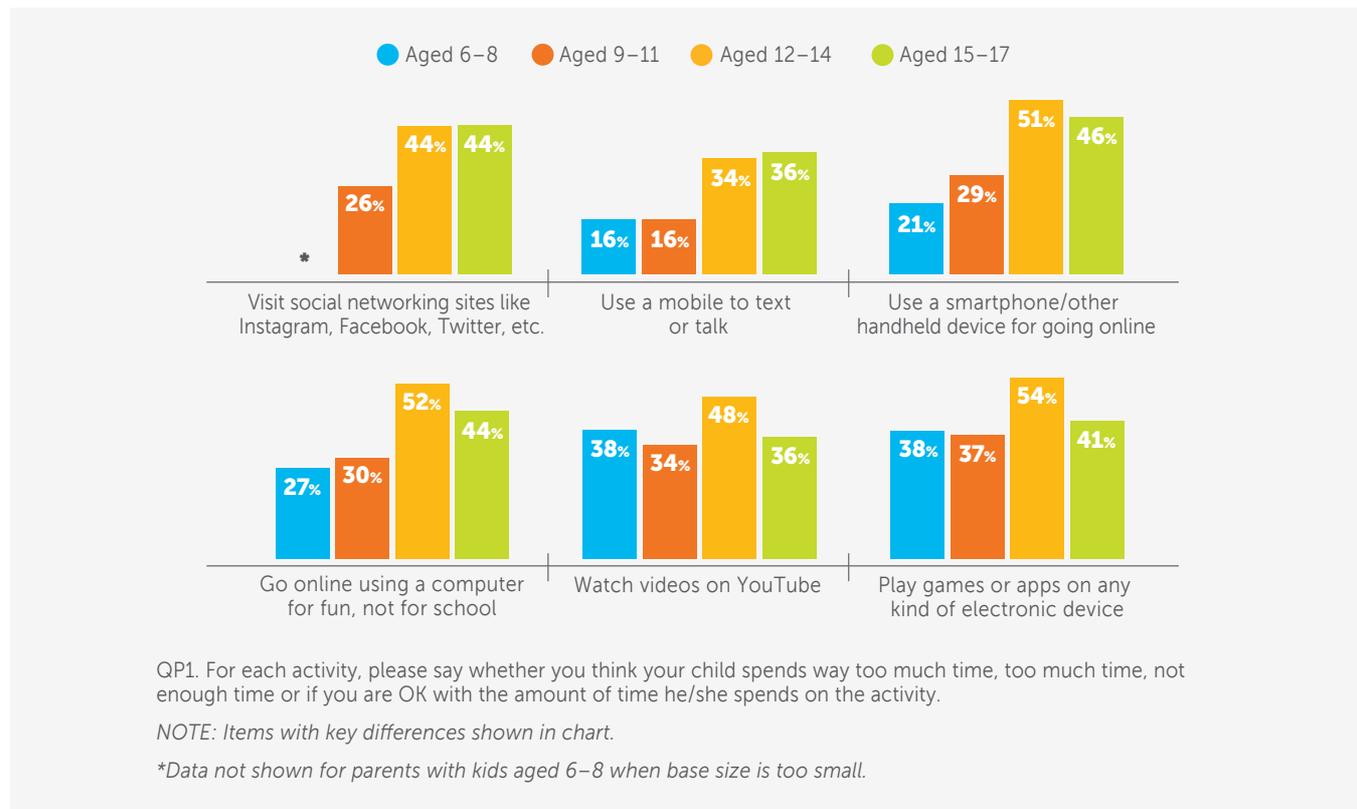
"I have a very busy schedule with sport training and study. I do still find reading to be very relaxing."

— 14-year-old girl, New South Wales – Regional

Parents are concerned about the amount of time their children spend on screen-related activities, particularly parents of kids aged 12–14.

Percentage of Parents Who Feel Their Children Spend Too Much Time on Each Activity

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17 Who Do Each Activity



75%

of parents with kids aged 6–17 agree:

“I wish my child would do more things that did not involve screen time.”

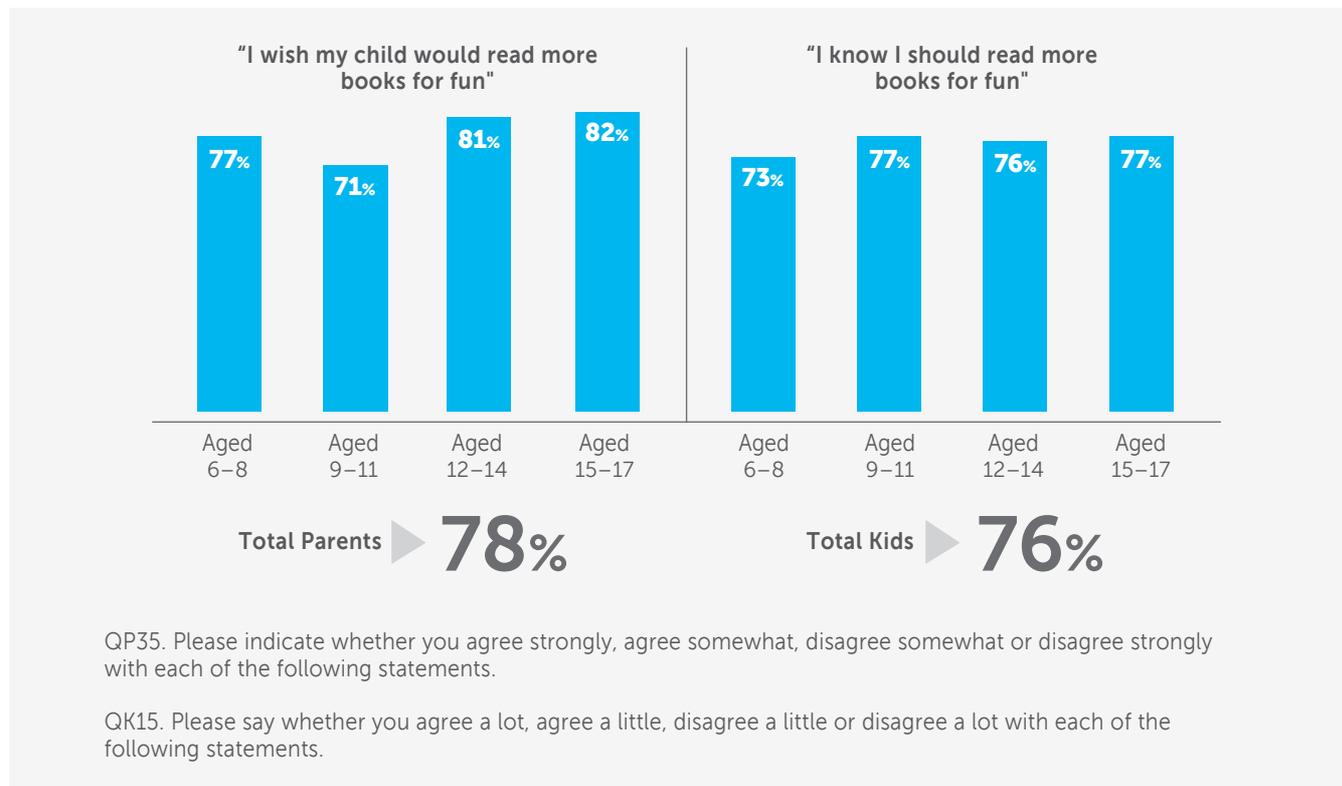
“Reading is a good pastime. It helps you relax and at the same time exercise the brain.”

— Mother, 14-year-old boy,
New South Wales – Regional

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

Parents’ and Children’s Agreement with Statements on Reading More Books for Fun

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17 (Left) and Children Aged 6–17 (Right)



SPOTLIGHT:

What Makes Frequent Readers

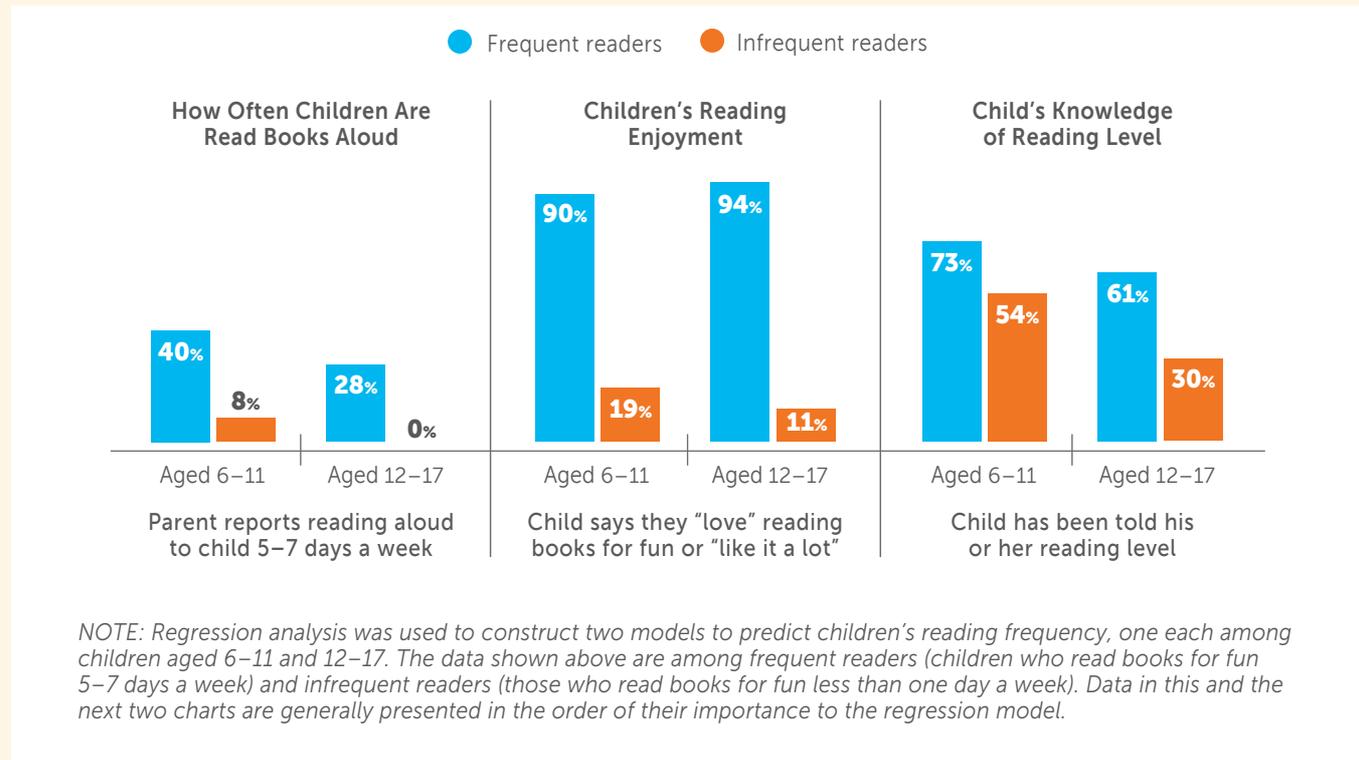
There are three dynamics that are among the most powerful predictors of reading frequency for children aged 6–17.

“I think that reading is a great thing for kids and even adults. I love reading because I can just read without really worrying about what’s going on around me.”

— 11-year-old boy, New South Wales – Regional

Top Predictors of Reading Frequency

Base: Children Aged 6–17



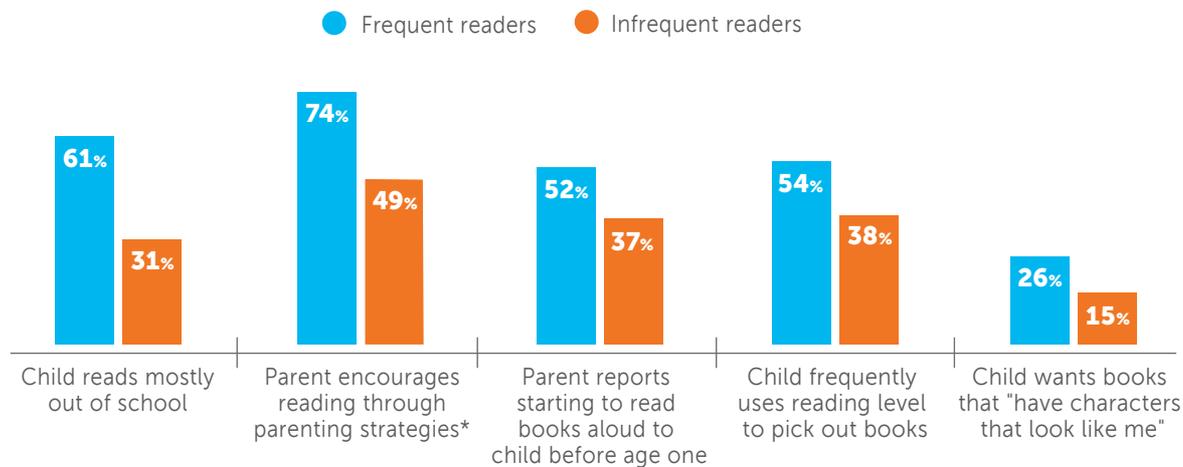
“My child is a great reader because she is encouraged to read each night before bed and when she is bored.”

— Mother, 11-year-old girl,
Tasmania

Additional predictors of reading frequency for children aged 6–11 include where they read books for fun, parental involvement in encouraging reading, and how early they started being read books aloud.

Additional Predictors of Reading Frequency

Base: Children Aged 6–11



NOTE: Data in this chart are part of the regression model for children aged 6–11.

* "Parenting strategies" is a net of "put limits on the amount of screen time my child gets," "build reading into his/her daily routine or schedule," "read the same books as my child so I can talk with him/her about the books," and "reward my child for reading books."

SPOTLIGHT: What Makes Frequent Readers

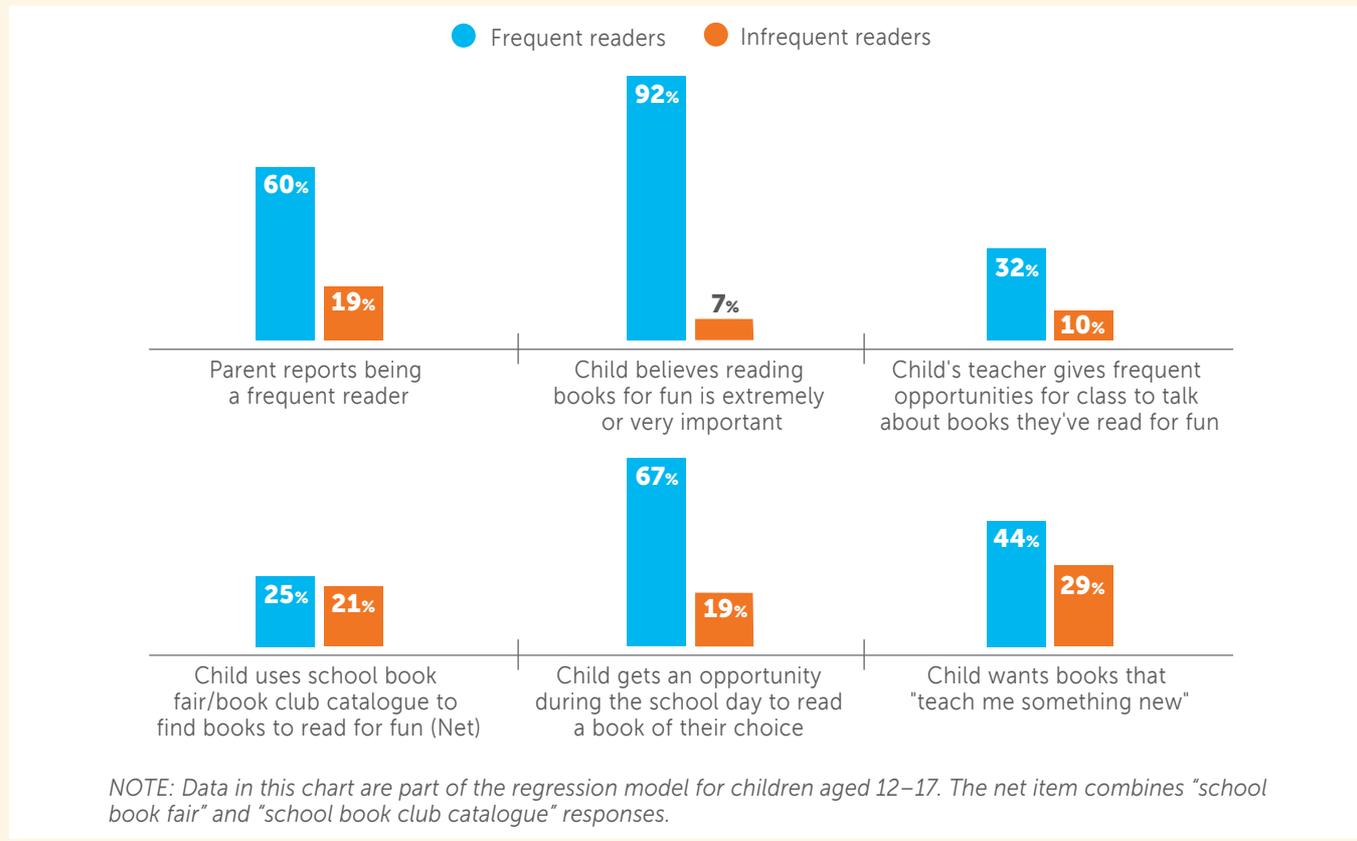
“Reading broadens the mind and helps make the learning process easier so I can become knowledgeable while having fun.”

—12-year-old girl,
Queensland – Regional

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.

Additional Predictors of Reading Frequency

Base: Children Aged 12–17



The total number of books read annually by frequent readers is dramatically higher than the number read by infrequent readers, especially among children aged 12–17.

Average Number of Books Children Have Read in the Past Year
Base: Children Aged 6–17



QK20a/b. About how many books have you read in the past year?
NOTE: This question asks about reading books in general, not just “reading books for fun.”

80%

of infrequent readers aged 6–17

“haven’t read a book for fun in a while”, while 91% of frequent readers are currently reading at least one book for fun.

SPOTLIGHT: What Makes Frequent Readers

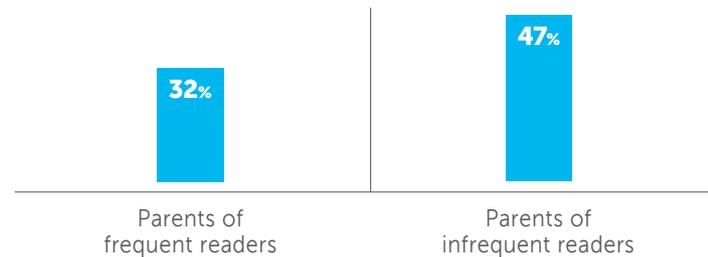
“If she enjoys reading, she will learn more and want to do it more often.”

— Mother, 6-year-old girl, Queensland – Regional

Parents of infrequent readers are more likely to say they need help finding books their child likes compared with parents of frequent readers.

Parents’ Agreement with Statement: “I need help finding books my child likes”

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



QP35. Please indicate whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with each of the following statements.

NOTE: 40% of parents with frequent readers disagree somewhat and 27% disagree strongly; 36% of parents with infrequent readers disagree somewhat and 17% disagree strongly.

What Makes Frequent Readers: The Most Powerful Predictors

For each age group shown, **frequent readers are more likely** than infrequent readers to:

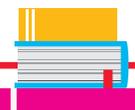
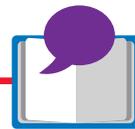
Kids Aged 12–17

- Have **parents** who are **frequent readers**
- Strongly believe **reading books for fun is important**
- Have **teachers** who give opportunities to **talk with classmates about books read for fun**
- Use a **school book fair** or **book club catalogue to find books**
- Have the opportunity to **read independently during the school day**
- Want books that **“teach me something new”**

These kids read an average of **25.8 BOOKS** per year vs. **4** by infrequent readers

Kids Aged 6–17

- Have parents who **read them books aloud** 5–7 days a week
- Say they **love reading books for fun** or like it a lot
- Have been told their **reading level**



- Read** mostly out of school
- Have **parents** who **encourage reading** books for fun in specific ways (*learn how on page 20*)
- Have been **read aloud to before age one**
- Frequently **use their reading level** to pick out books
- Want books that **“have characters that look like me”**

These kids read an average of **45.6 BOOKS** per year vs. **17** by infrequent readers

Kids Aged 6–11

To determine what predicts kids' reading frequency, more than 130 measures were included in a regression analysis.



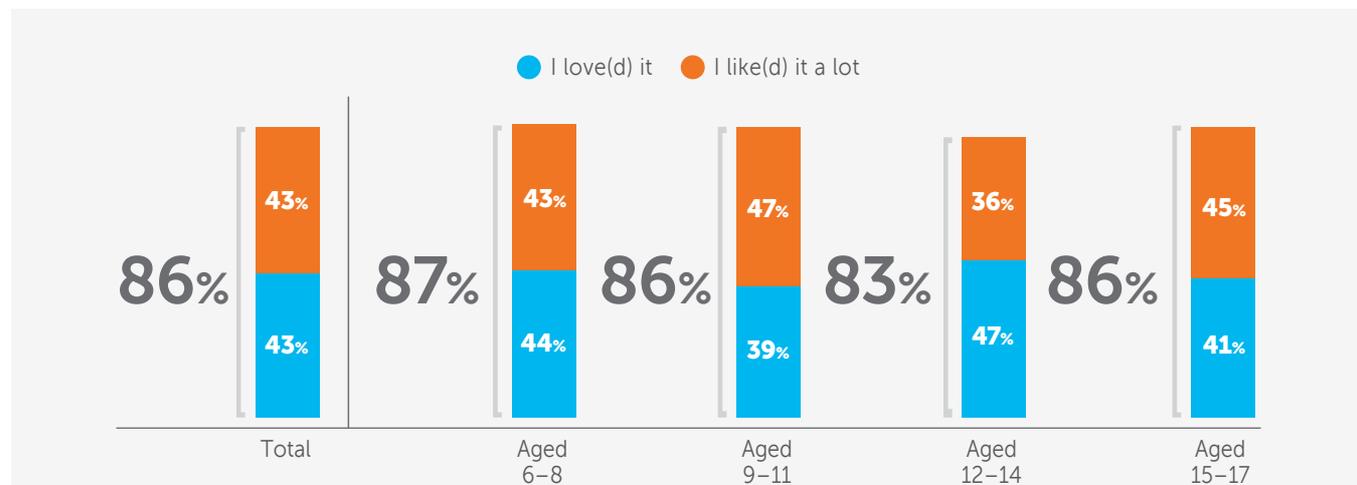
SECTION II:

Reading Aloud at Home

Across all ages, the overwhelming majority of children (86%) say they love(d) being read books aloud at home or like(d) it a lot.

Degree to Which Children Enjoy(ed) Being Read Books Aloud at Home

Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Are or Were Read Books Aloud at Home



QK25a. Do you like it when you are read books aloud at home? OR Did you like being read books aloud at home when you were younger?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 87% of kids who are or were read books aloud at home. Among children aged 6–17, 13% say they like(d) being read to aloud a little; 1% say they do/did not like it at all.

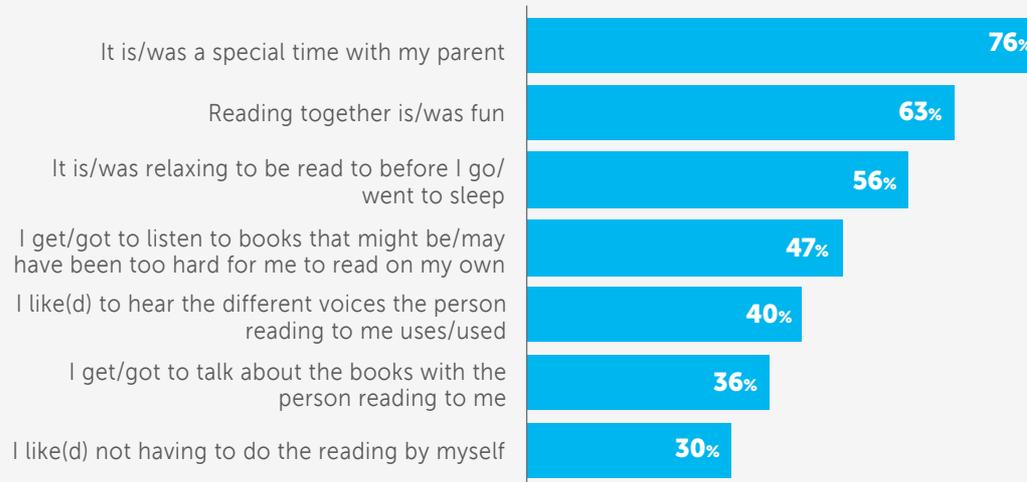
The top reason children say they enjoy being read aloud to is because it's a special time with their parents.

"I felt comfortable and relaxed when mum or dad read to me. I could close my eyes and imagine I was there. I felt very close to them."

— 13-year-old boy, Victoria – Metro

Reasons Kids Enjoy(ed) Being Read Aloud to at Home

Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Are or Were Read Books Aloud at Home and Love(d) or Like(d) it a Lot



QK25b. Which of these, if any, are reasons you like(d) being read aloud to at home?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 75% of kids who report they are or were read books aloud at home and who love(d) it or like(d) it a lot.

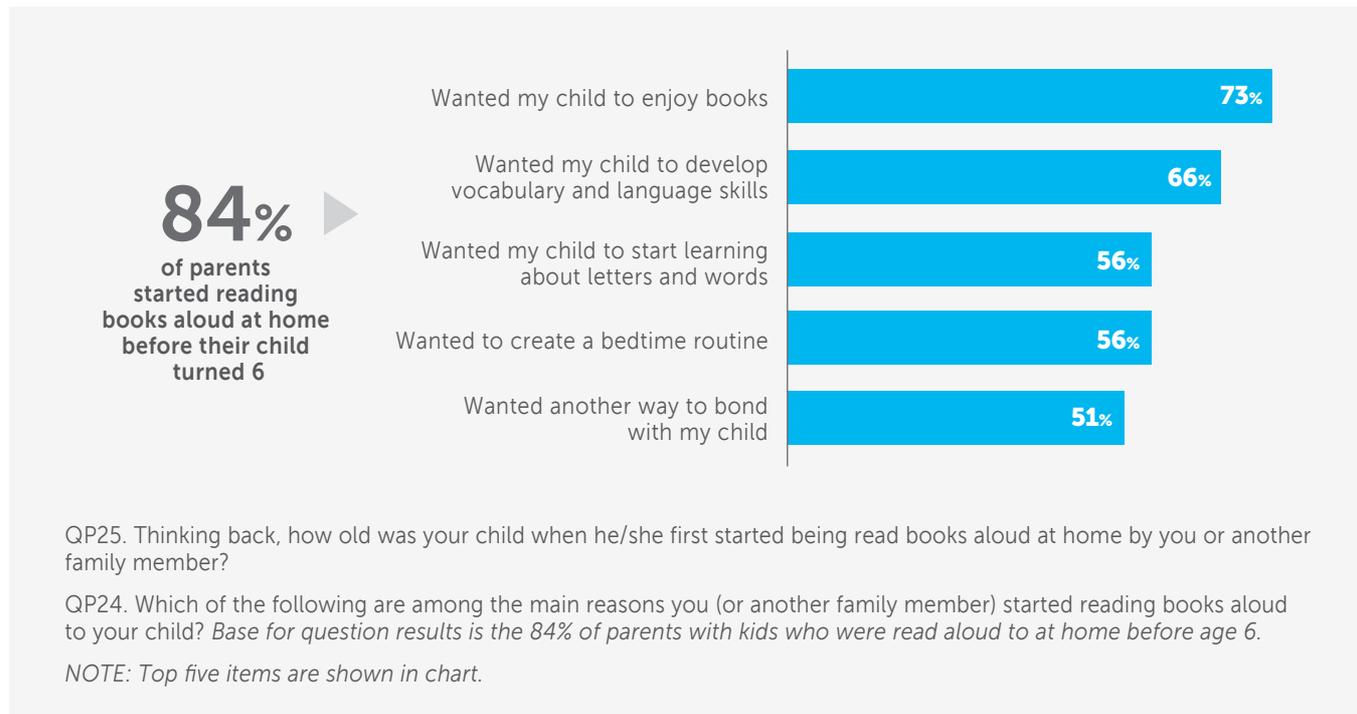
“When she was little, I used to have a pile of about 20 books I would read to her at bedtime. It was really lovely to sit cuddled up and read together.”

— Mother, 15-year-old girl,
South Australia – Metro

Overall, more than eight in 10 parents (84%) say their children are read books aloud at home before age 6, mainly because they wanted their child to enjoy books.

Percentage of Parents Who Say Their Child Was Read Books Aloud at Home Before Age 6 and Reasons Reading Aloud Started

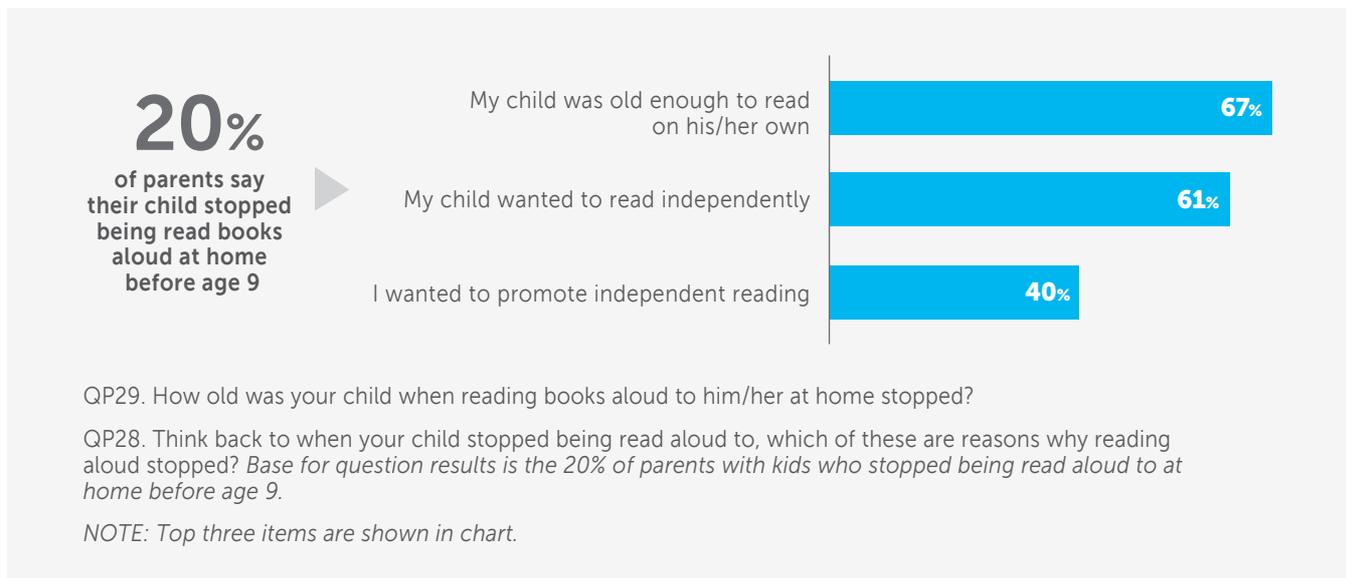
Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–17



One in five parents of children aged 6–17 (20%) stopped reading aloud to their child before age 9, most often citing reasons related to their child being able to read independently.

Percentage of Parents Who Say Their Child Stopped Being Read Books Aloud at Home Before Age 9 and Reasons Reading Aloud Stopped

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



“I love reading with my mum—it’s our time. But when I read by myself, I like learning new things, laughing, guessing what is going to happen next and using my imagination.”

—7-year-old girl, New South Wales – Metro

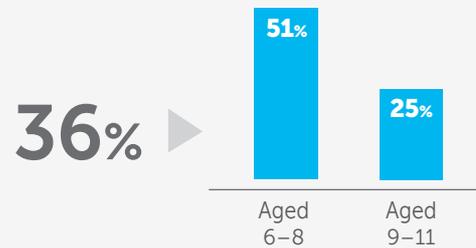
“When I was little, my mum and I would climb into bed and she would read to me. Sometimes I’d fall asleep, but we’d usually end up talking about something from the book. We haven’t done that for a while.”

— 14-year-old girl, Victoria – Regional

Among children aged 6–11 whose parents no longer read books aloud at home, more than one-third (36%) did not want their parents to stop.

Percentage of Children Who Say They “Wanted Reading Aloud to Continue”

Base: Children Aged 6–11 Who Were Read Books Aloud at Home



QK26. When your parent or family member stopped reading to you, were you ready for it to stop, did you want it to continue or did you not really care either way?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 59% of kids aged 6–11 (48% aged 6–8, 72% aged 9–11) who say they are no longer read books aloud at home.

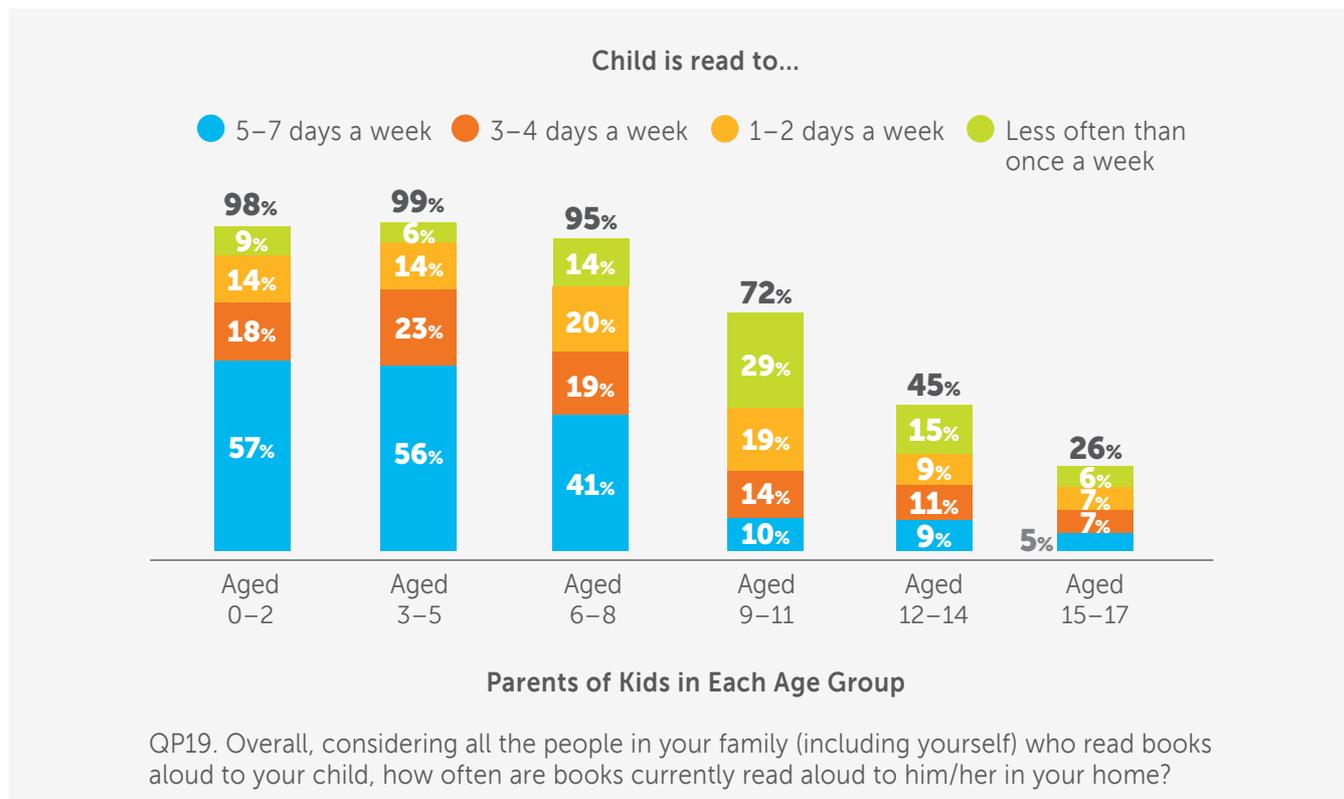
“It’s a good way to build imagination and let your child just be a child and enjoy a book for what it is.”

— Mother, 2-year-old girl, Queensland – Metro

More than half of children aged 0–5 (57%) are read aloud to at home 5–7 days a week. This declines to four in 10 kids aged 6–8 (41%), and one in 10 kids aged 9–11 (10%).

Frequency with Which Parents Say Their Child Is Read Books Aloud at Home

Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–17



“Reading is important later in school and life; the sooner he appreciates the benefits the better.”

— Father, 5-year-old boy,
Victoria – Metro

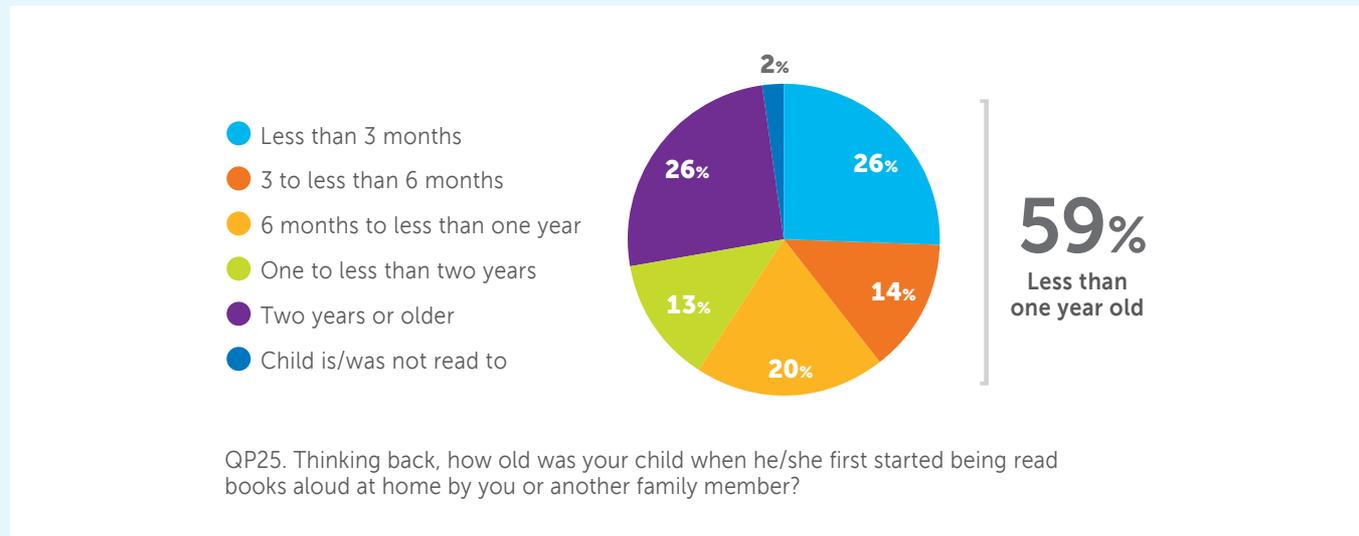
SPOTLIGHT:

Reading with Kids from Birth

Nearly six in 10 parents of children aged 0–5 (59%) say they started reading aloud to their child before age one, while only 26% say they began under the age of three months.

Age of Child When Reading Books Aloud at Home Started

Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–5



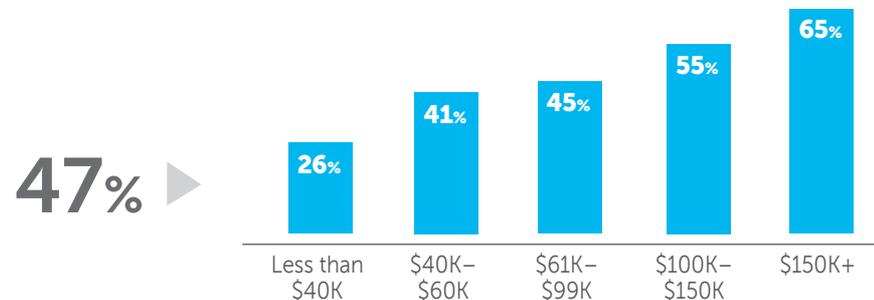
“Reading aloud is a good bonding experience as well as learning experience.”

— Mother, 2-year-old girl, Queensland – Metro

Just under half of parents with children aged 0–5 (47%) received the advice that children should be read aloud to from birth; yet only about one-quarter of parents from the lowest-income households (26%) received this advice.

Percentage of Parents Who Received Advice That Children Should Be Read Aloud to from Birth

Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–5



QP52. Thinking back to when your child was a baby, did you hear, read or receive advice that your child should be read aloud to from birth?

SPOTLIGHT: Reading with Kids from Birth

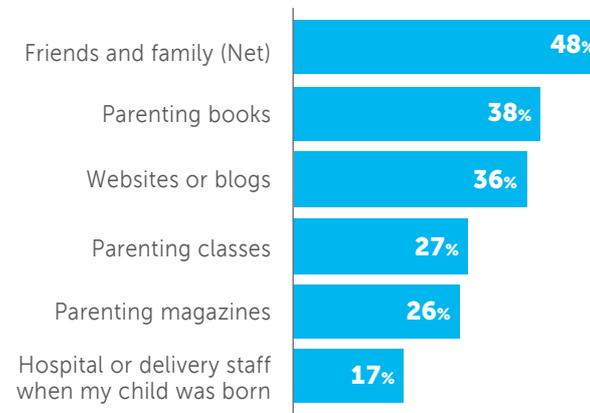
“I love that my daughter enjoys listening to stories, and pointing at things we talk about or things she likes me to talk about. I love that she is able to interact with me through reading and illustrations.”

— Mother, 1-year-old girl,
Victoria – Metro

Among parents who received advice that children should be read aloud to from birth, the most common source of this advice was friends and family.

Sources of Advice That Children Should Be Read Aloud to from Birth

Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–5 Who Received This Advice When Their Child Was a Baby

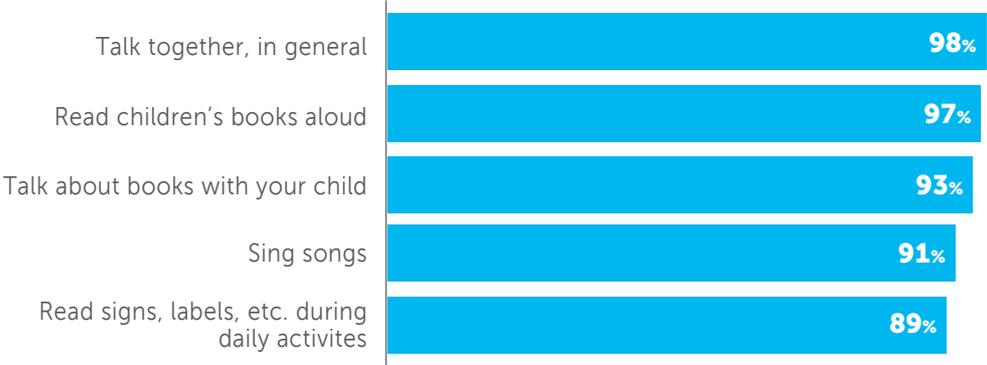


QP53. Which of the following were sources of the advice to read aloud from birth?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 47% of parents with children aged 0–5 who received advice to read aloud from birth when their child was a baby. The net item combines four items: “child’s grandparents,” “other parents,” “teachers I know” and “other relatives/friends.” Top six items are shown in chart.

Parents say that talking in general and reading books aloud to children are top ways to develop a child’s language skills.

Percentage of Parents Who Say Each Is Extremely/Very Important in Developing Child’s Language Skills
Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–5



QP6. How important do you think it is to do each of following with your child in order to develop his/her language skills?

NOTE: Top five items are shown in chart.

“It helped me establish which words were which and what they meant. My mum would explain the meaning of a word if I didn’t know it and it helped me develop a great vocabulary.”

– 12-year-old girl, Victoria – Metro

SPOTLIGHT: Reading with Kids from Birth

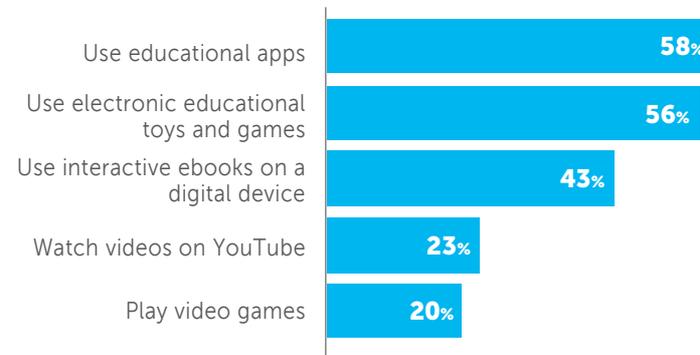
“I think it is good for him to be taken away from everyday life and to use his imagination to enter the world and emotions of the character. He also needs to realise fun can involve lots of things, not just playing games or using the iPad.”

— Mother, 5-year-old boy, South Australia — Metro

Activities like playing video games, watching videos on YouTube or using digital devices and apps are deemed far less important in developing language skills.

Percentage of Parents Who Say Each Is Extremely/Very Important in Developing Child’s Language Skills

Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–5



QP6. How important do you think it is to do each of the following with your children in order to develop his/her language skills?

NOTE: Bottom five items shown in chart.

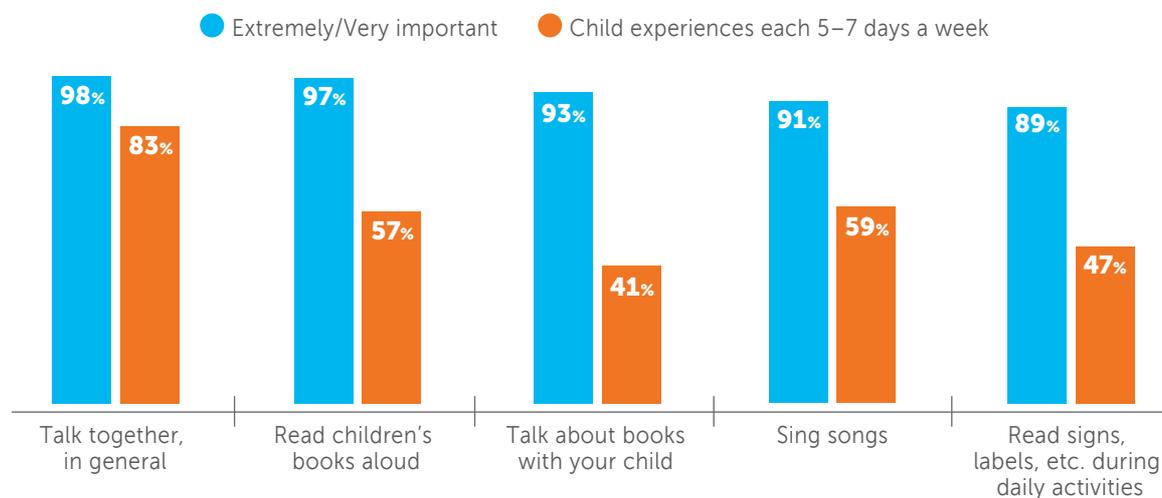
“He likes the bedtime story routine. We often miss a couple days due to normal things that come up, but I try at least 5–6 days a week to have myself or my eldest son read to the young ones.”

— Mother, 5-year-old boy,
Queensland – Metro

Considering the activities cited by parents as the most important to develop their child’s language skills, in many cases these experiences are not happening 5–7 days a week.

Comparison of Parents’ Views on the Importance of Activities to Develop Child’s Language Skills and Whether Each Activity Happens at Home 5–7 Days a Week

Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–5



QP6. How important do you think it is to do each of the following with your child in order to develop his/her language skills?

QP36. Thinking about activities your child might participate in or do at home, about how many days a week, if any, is each of these experienced by your child at home?

NOTE: Top five items based on importance are shown in chart.

SPOTLIGHT: Reading with Kids from Birth

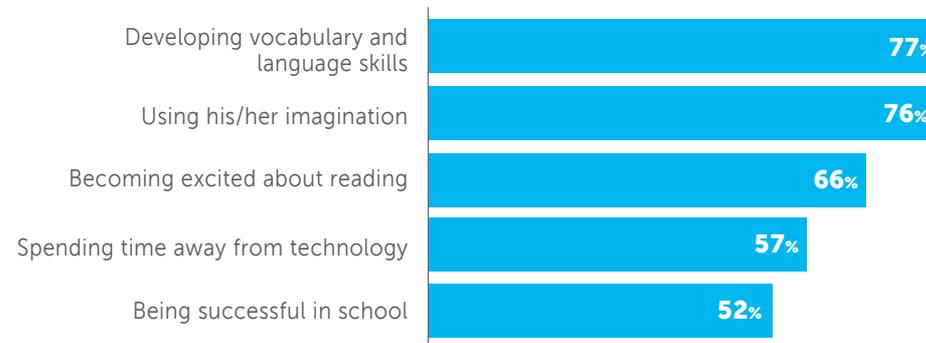
“Reading expands his mind, vocabulary and concept of what is in the world around the house and in the wider world.”

— Mother, 4-year-old boy,
Victoria – Metro

Parents of children aged 0–5 say developing vocabulary and language skills and using their imagination are the top benefits they want their kids to gain from reading books for fun.

Percentage of Parents Who Say Each Is a Top Benefit They Want Their Child to Get from Reading Books for Fun

Base: Parents of Children Aged 0–5



QP4. When you think about the benefits of reading books for fun, which of the following are the top benefits you most want your child to get from reading books for fun as your child grows up?

NOTE: Top five items are shown in chart.

Read Aloud: Start Early & Keep Going

Percentage of Kids Aged 0–11 Who Are Read Books Aloud 5–7 Days a Week:

57%
Kids Aged
0–2

56%
Kids Aged
3–5

41%
Kids Aged
6–8

10%
Kids Aged
9–11

Among parents of kids aged 0–5
47% RECEIVED ADVICE
that children should be read aloud to from birth

Among kids aged 6–17
**86% ENJOY(ED) BEING READ
ALoud TO AT HOME** because:

26% Among the **lowest-income households**

65% Among the **highest-income households**

76% It's a **special time** with my parent

63% Reading together is **fun**

56% It's **relaxing** to be read to before I go to sleep

Parents of Kids Aged 0–5 Started
Reading Aloud to Their Child:

59% Before **age one**

26% Before **three months old**

Among kids aged 6–8 who are
no longer read aloud to at home

51% WISH IT HAD CONTINUED



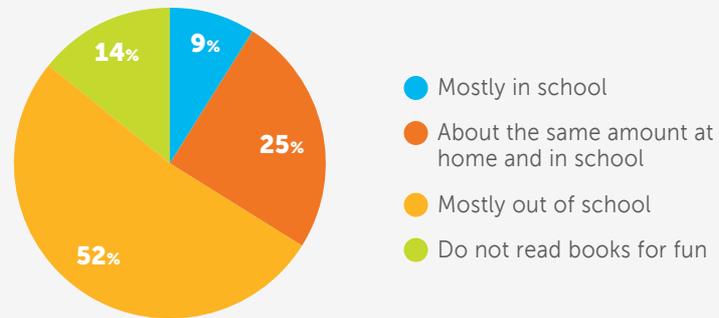
SECTION III:

Reading in School

While half of children (52%) say they read books for fun mostly out of school, one-quarter (25%) say they read at home and school about equally, and 9% say they read for fun mostly in school.

Where Children Read Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



QK9. Where do you read books for fun?

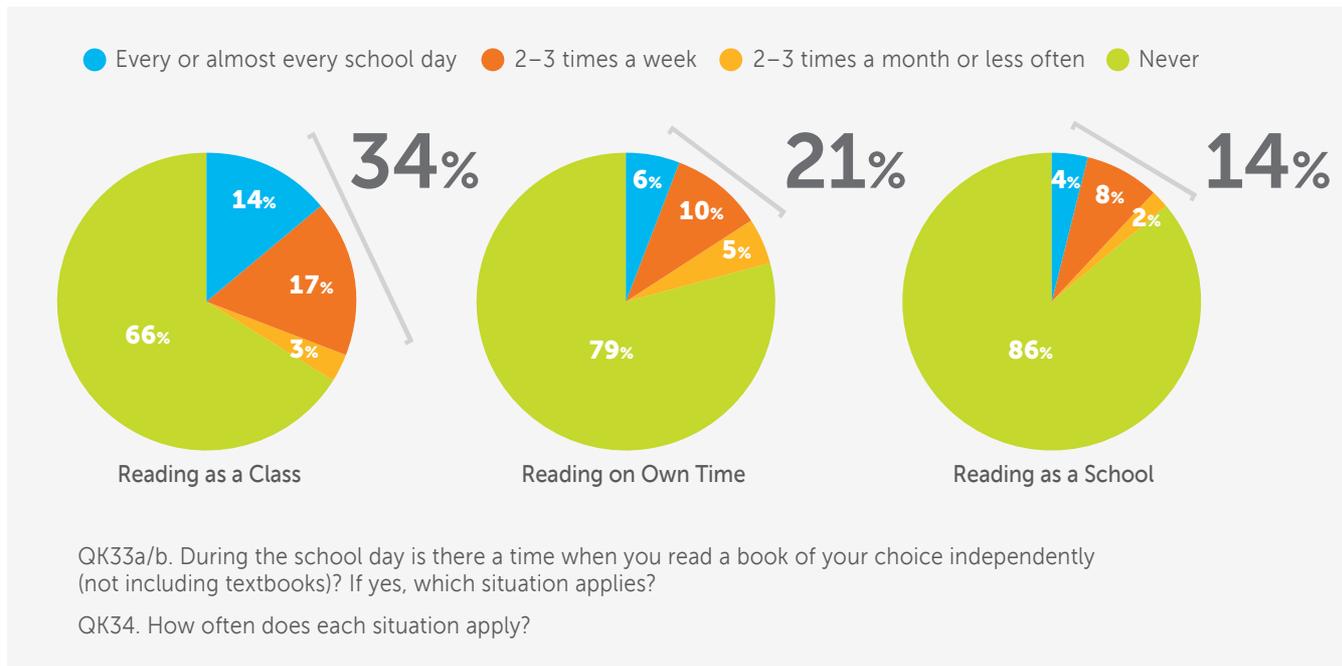
"I love independent reading when I pick a really good book to read."

— 11-year-old boy, Victoria – Metro

Some children have opportunities to read a book of their choice independently during the school day—usually as a class—yet these experiences rarely happen every or almost every school day.

Frequency with Which Children Read a Book of Their Choice Independently in School as a Class, During Available Free Time and as a School

Base: Children Aged 6–17



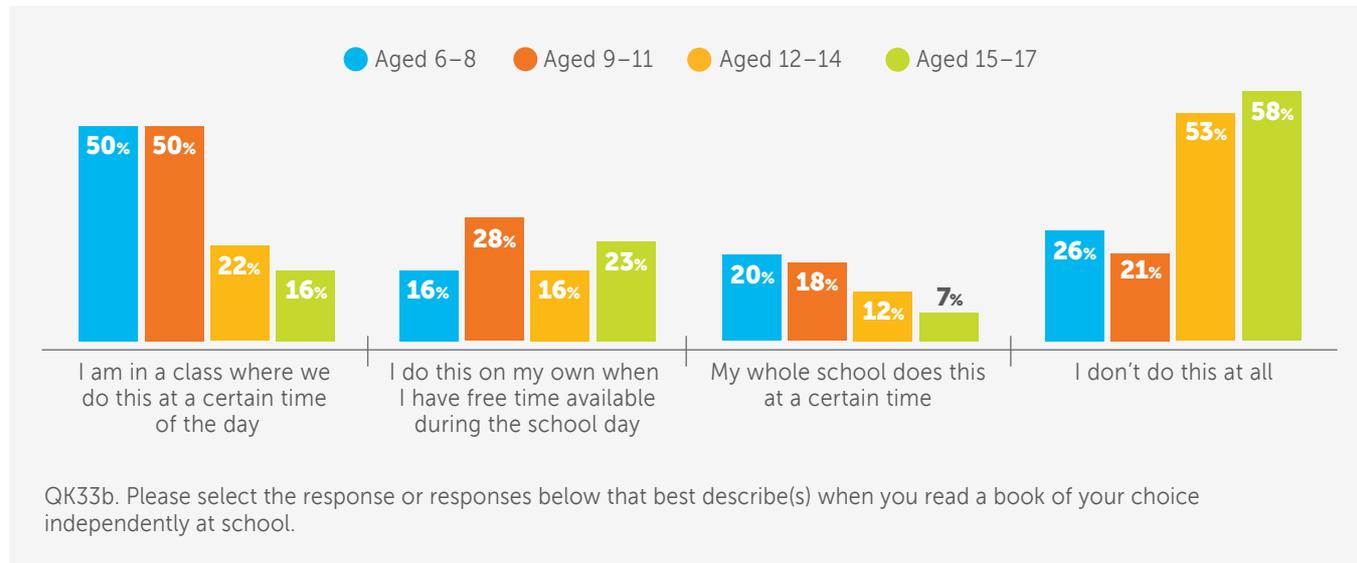
“I think there needs to be more reading time at school. It is great that their day is full but unless they can read, they are always going to be a bit behind.”

— Mother, 8-year-old boy, ACT

Children aged 6–11 are the most likely to read a book of their choice as a class, while kids aged 12 and older are the least likely to have any time for independent reading at school.

Percentage of Children Who Read a Book of Their Choice Independently Each Way in School

Base: Children Aged 6–17



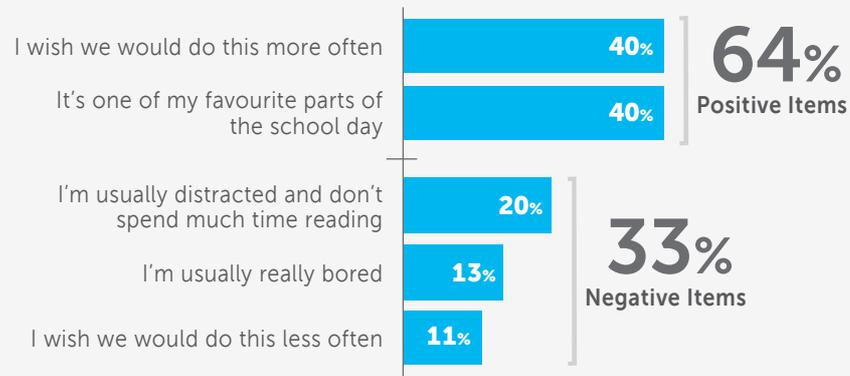
“There are so many different stories that I would not have heard of if I didn’t read.”

— 15-year-old boy, New South Wales – Regional

Overall, children who read independently with their class or school feel more positively (64%) than negatively (33%) about this experience, and say that they wish they could do this more often.

How Children Feel About Independent Reading Time at School

Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Read Independently with Their Class or School at a Certain Time



QK36. Which of these, if any, describe how you feel about independent reading at school (when you do this as a class or school)?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 44% of kids who read independently with their class or school at a certain time.

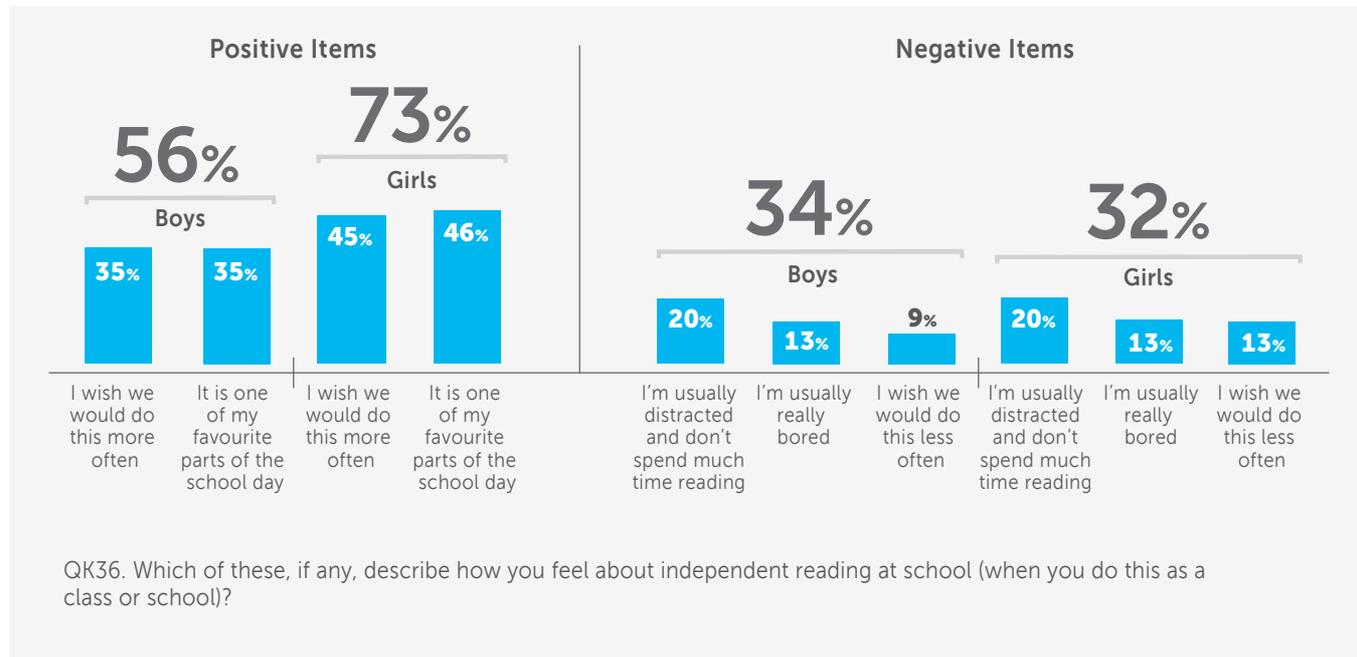
“I love to learn and laugh and be inspired by books.”

— 10-year-old girl, Victoria – Metro

Girls are more likely to enjoy independent reading at school: 73% of girls cited positive views compared with 56% of boys.

How Children Feel About Independent Reading Time at School

Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Read Independently with Their Class or School at a Certain Time



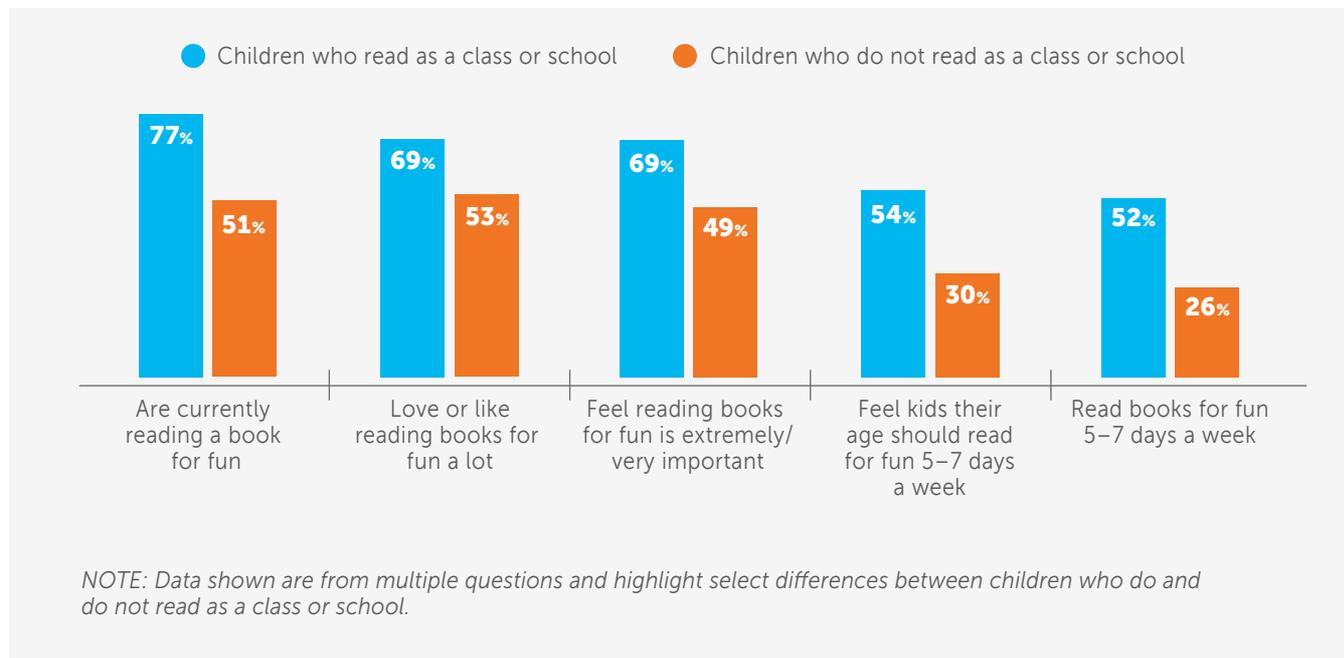
“Books can give me fulfillment and passion. When I read, it makes the time enjoyable and I get very involved in my book a lot of the time.”

— 17-year-old girl, Queensland – Regional

Children who are given time for independent reading at school are more likely to be reading currently and frequently, more likely to enjoy reading books for fun and believe it is important, compared with those who are not.

Children’s Behaviours and Views on Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



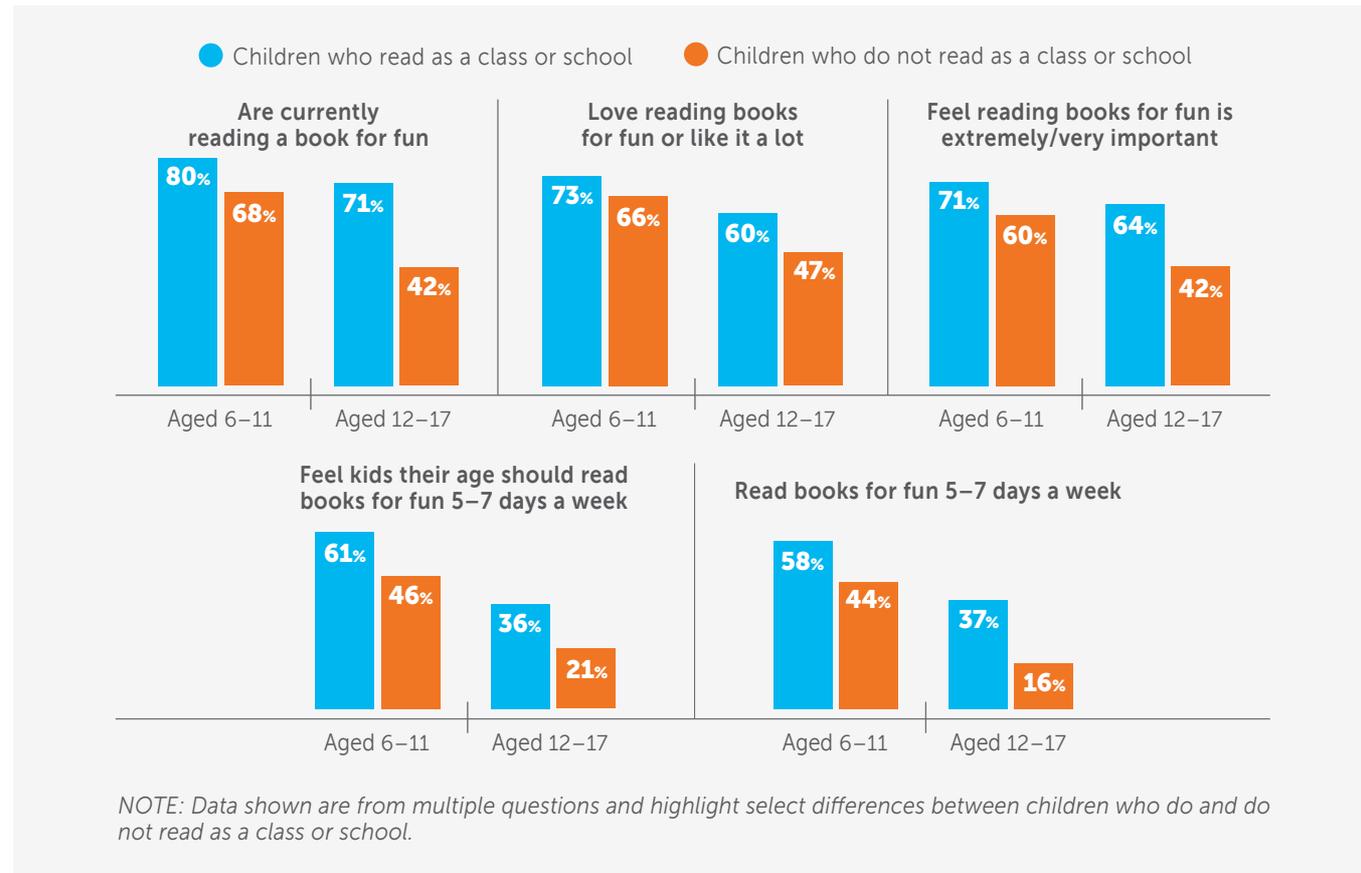
“I love to escape in a book with a great storyline and characters.”

— 16-year-old girl, Tasmania

Reading in school has a greater impact on older children’s views and behaviours around reading books for fun.

Children’s Behaviours and Views on Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



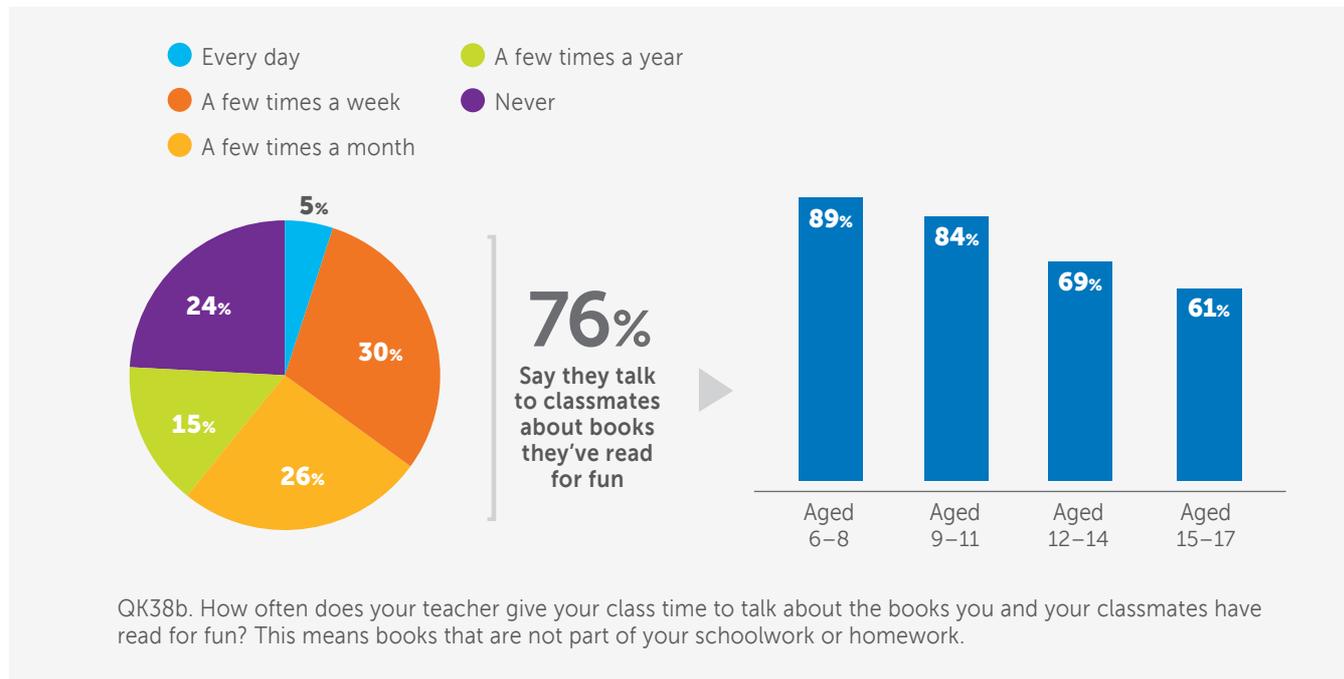
“Reading connects me to my friends and we have something to talk about.”

— 14-year-old girl, Victoria – Metro

Three-quarters of children (76%) say that at least a few times a year, their class is given time to talk about the books they have read for fun, but far fewer say this happens a few times a week or every day (35%).

How Often Children Are Given Time to Talk About the Books They Have Read for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



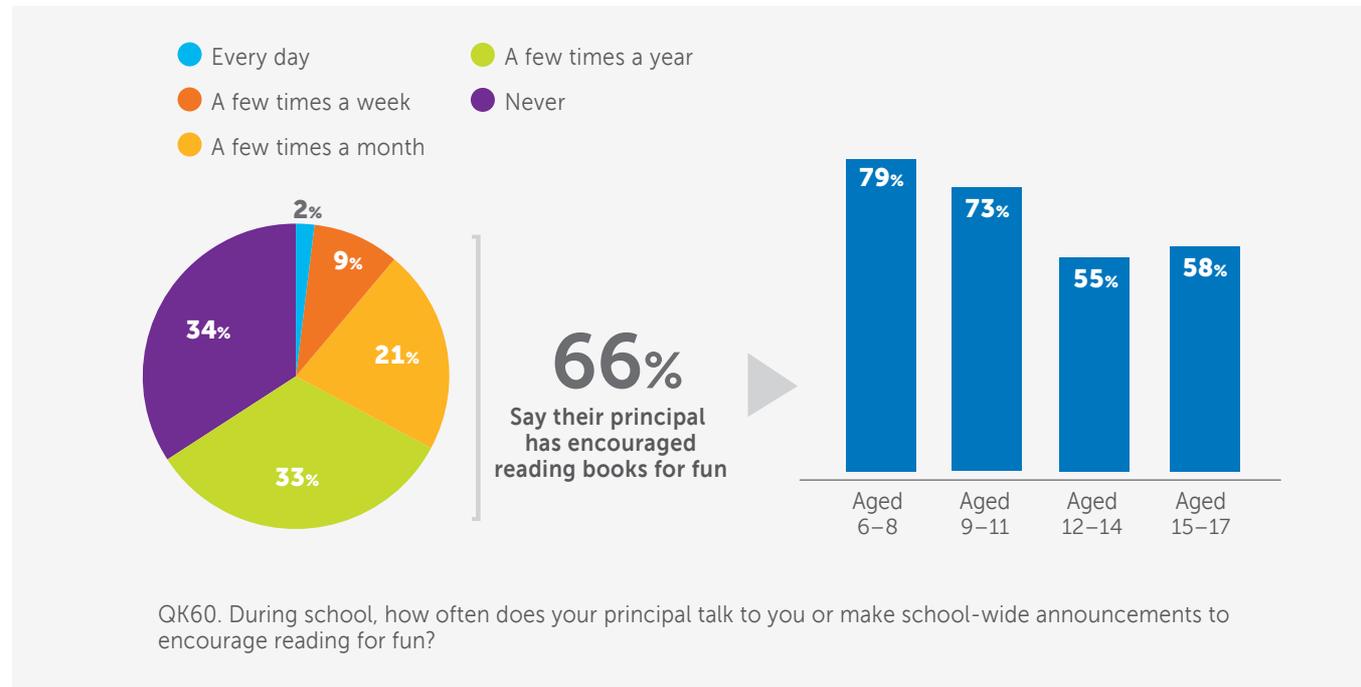
"I love to read so I can learn more."

— 6-year-old girl, Queensland – Metro

Overall, two-thirds of children (66%) 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.

How Often Principal Encourages Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



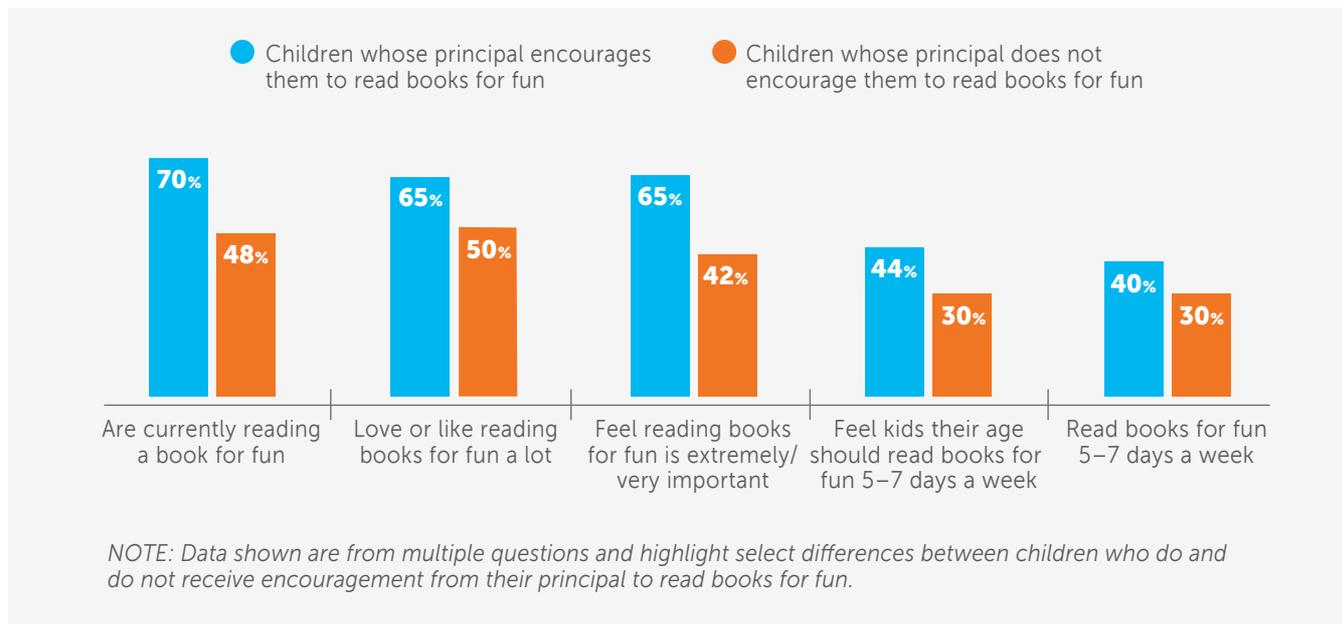
“Reading means everything to me and is educational in every way.”

— 6-year-old girl, Victoria – Metro

Children whose principal encourages 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.

Children’s Behaviours and Views on Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



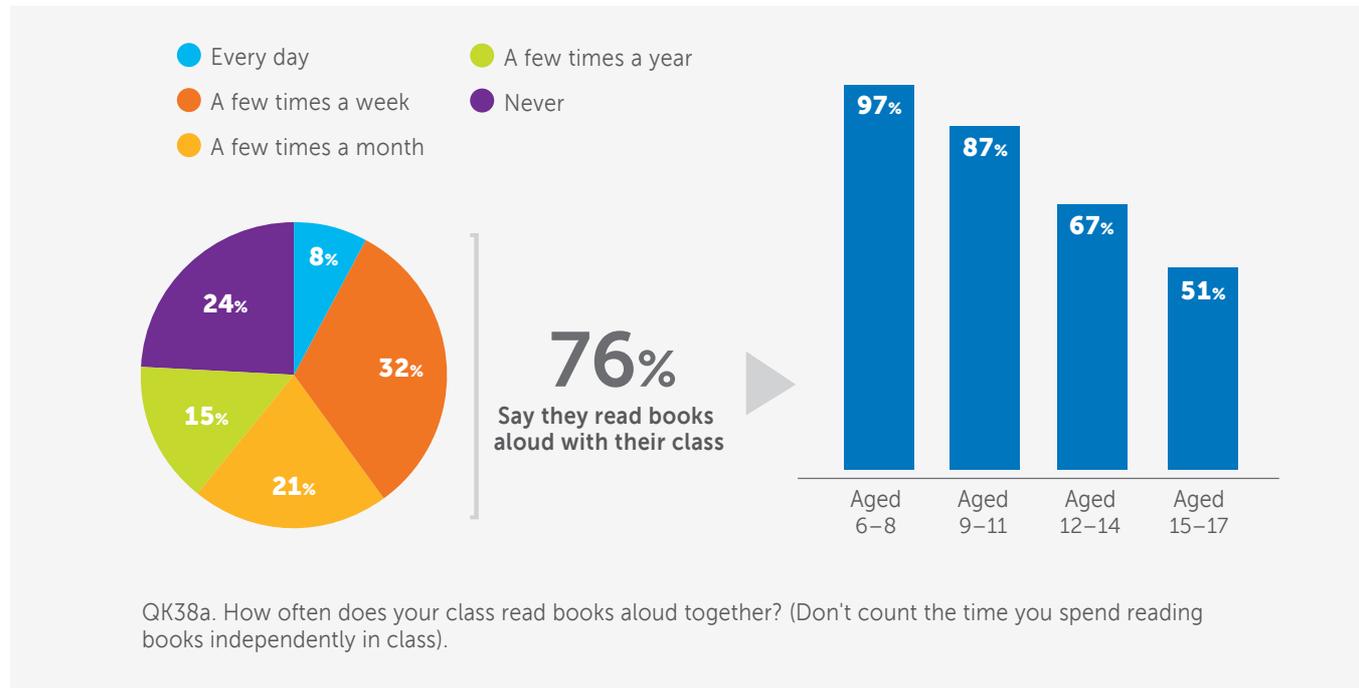
"I like the teacher reading to me."

— 8-year-old boy, New South Wales – Metro

When considering reading books aloud in class, 76% of children say this happens at least a few times a year, but just four in 10 (40%) say reading aloud in class happens a few times a week or every day, most commonly among younger kids.

How Often Class Reads Books Aloud Together

Base: Children Aged 6–17



SPOTLIGHT:

Kids' Use of Their Reading Level

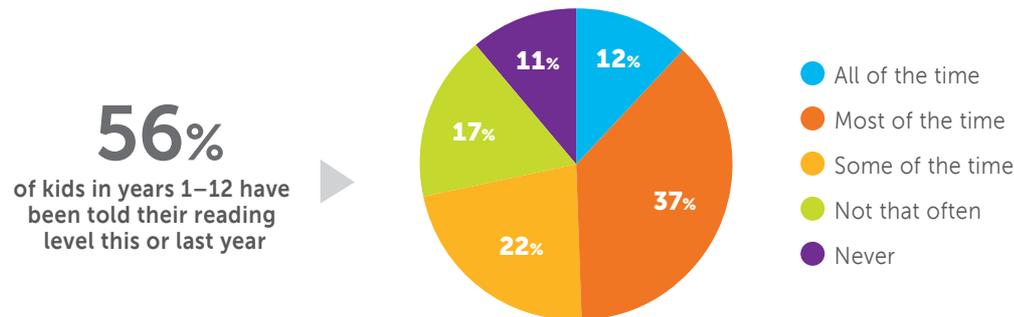
More than half of children in years 1–12 (56%) have been told their reading level in either the current or prior school year, and nine in 10 of these kids (89%) have used their reading level to pick out books.

"If I read more, I get to learn new words and improve my thinking. I can use the right words when I try to describe something and I love it."

— 10-year-old girl, Victoria – Metro

Percentage of Children Who Have Been Told Their Reading Level and Frequency with Which They Use Their Reading Level to Pick Books

Base: Children in Years 1–12



QK39a. In this or the past school year, has your school or teacher told you your reading level? 15% of kids responded they were "not sure" if they were told their reading level; 29% responded "no."

QK40. When you pick out books to read for fun, how often, if at all, do you use your reading level to pick out books? Base for question results is the 56% of kids in years 1–12 who have been told their reading level this year or last year.

SPOTLIGHT: Kids' Use of Their Reading Level

"My child has always enjoyed reading and likes to challenge herself with age-appropriate books."

— Mother, 9-year-old girl,
Victoria – Metro

When children use their reading level to pick books, about half (48%) say they pick books above and below their reading level in equal measure; one-third (33%) usually pick books above their reading level, while 6% usually pick below-level books.

How Children Use Their Reading Level to Choose Books

Base: Children in Years 1–12 Who Have Been Told Their Reading Level and Have Used It to Pick Books



QK42a. When you use your reading level to pick out books, which best describes the books you choose?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 51% of kids in years 1–12 who have been told their reading level and have used it to pick books.

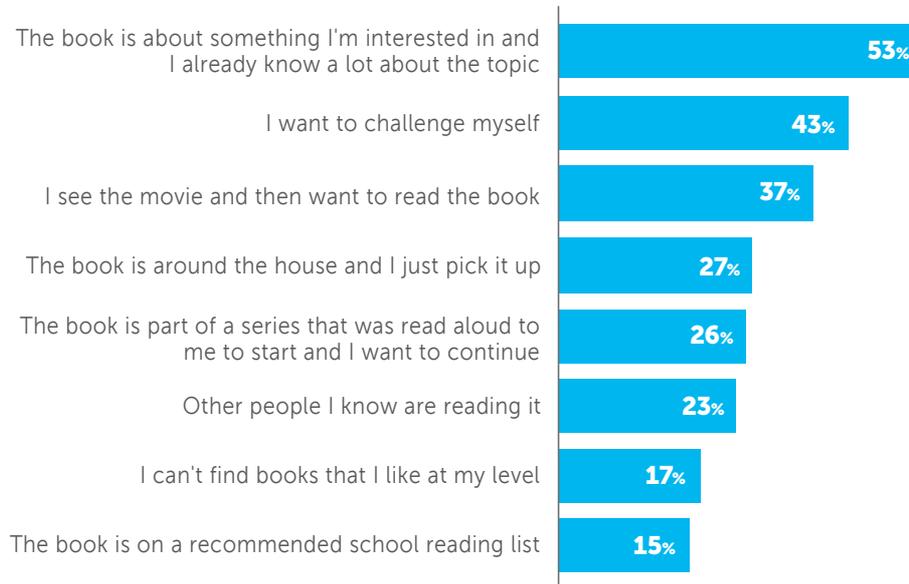
“I like reading books with a cliff hanger at the end of each chapter.”

— 14-year-old girl, New South Wales – Metro

The most common reasons children in years 4–12 choose books above their reading level are to read about topics they know a lot about and to challenge themselves.

Children’s Reasons for Choosing Books Above Reading Level

Base: Children in Years 4–12 Who Choose Books Above Their Reading Level



QK42c. Which of the following, if any, are reasons you choose books that are above your reading level?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 37% of kids in years 4–12 who have been told their reading level, have used it to pick books and have chosen books above their reading level. Question not asked of kids aged 6–8.

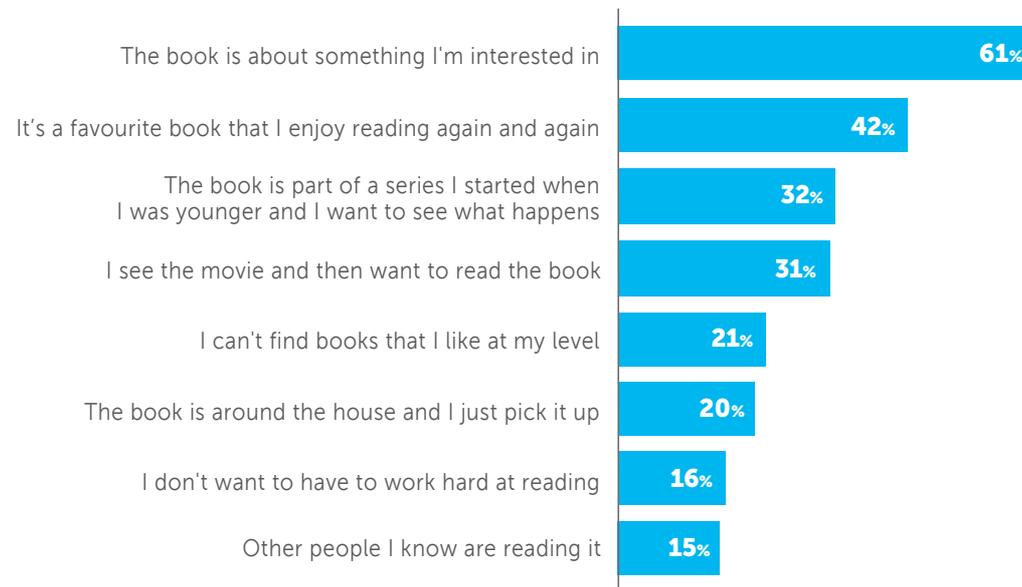
SPOTLIGHT: Kids' Use of Their Reading Level

"I like to read certain books lots of times."

— 11-year-old boy, Victoria –
Regional

The most common reasons kids in years 4–12 choose books below their reading level are to read about topics that interest them and to re-read favourite books.

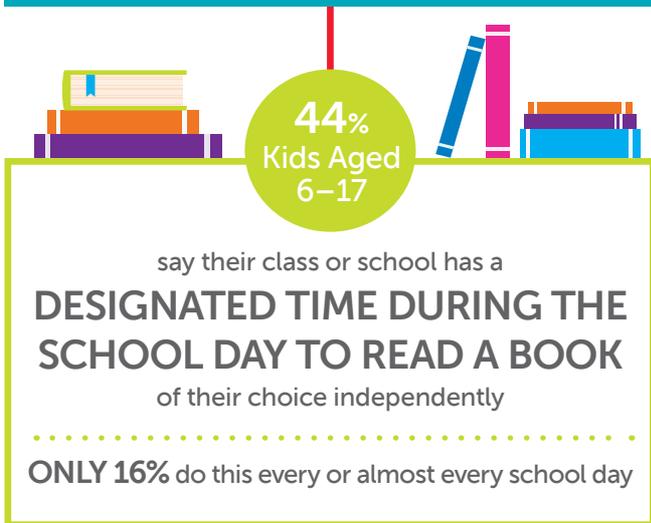
Children's Reasons for Choosing Books Below Reading Level
Base: Children in Years 4–12 Who Choose Books Below Their Reading Level



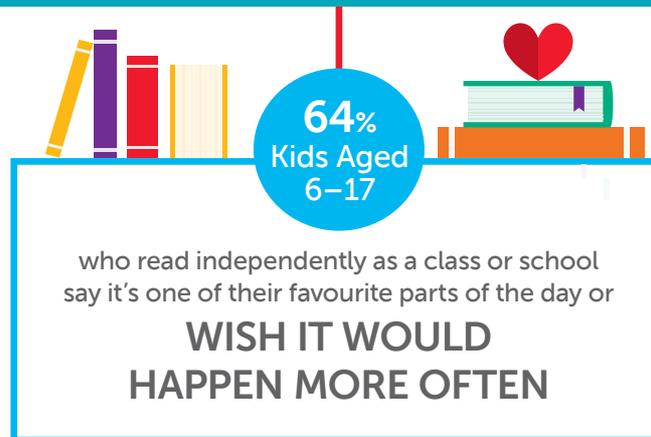
QK42b. Which of the following, if any, are reasons you choose books that are below your reading level?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 25% of kids in years 4–12 who have been told their reading level, have used it to pick books and have chosen books below their reading level. Question not asked of kids aged 6–8.

The Power of Independent Reading In School



% of kids with opportunities to **read independently** as a **class or school** during the school day



Children who are given time for independent reading at school are more likely than those who are not to:

- ▶ Be currently reading a book for fun **77% vs. 51%**
-
- ▶ Love or like reading books for fun a lot **69% vs. 53%**
-
- ▶ Agree that reading books for fun is extremely or very important **69% vs. 49%**
-
- ▶ Feel kids their age should read books for fun 5-7 days a week **54% vs. 30%**
-
- ▶ Be frequent readers, reading books for fun 5-7 days a week **52% vs. 26%**



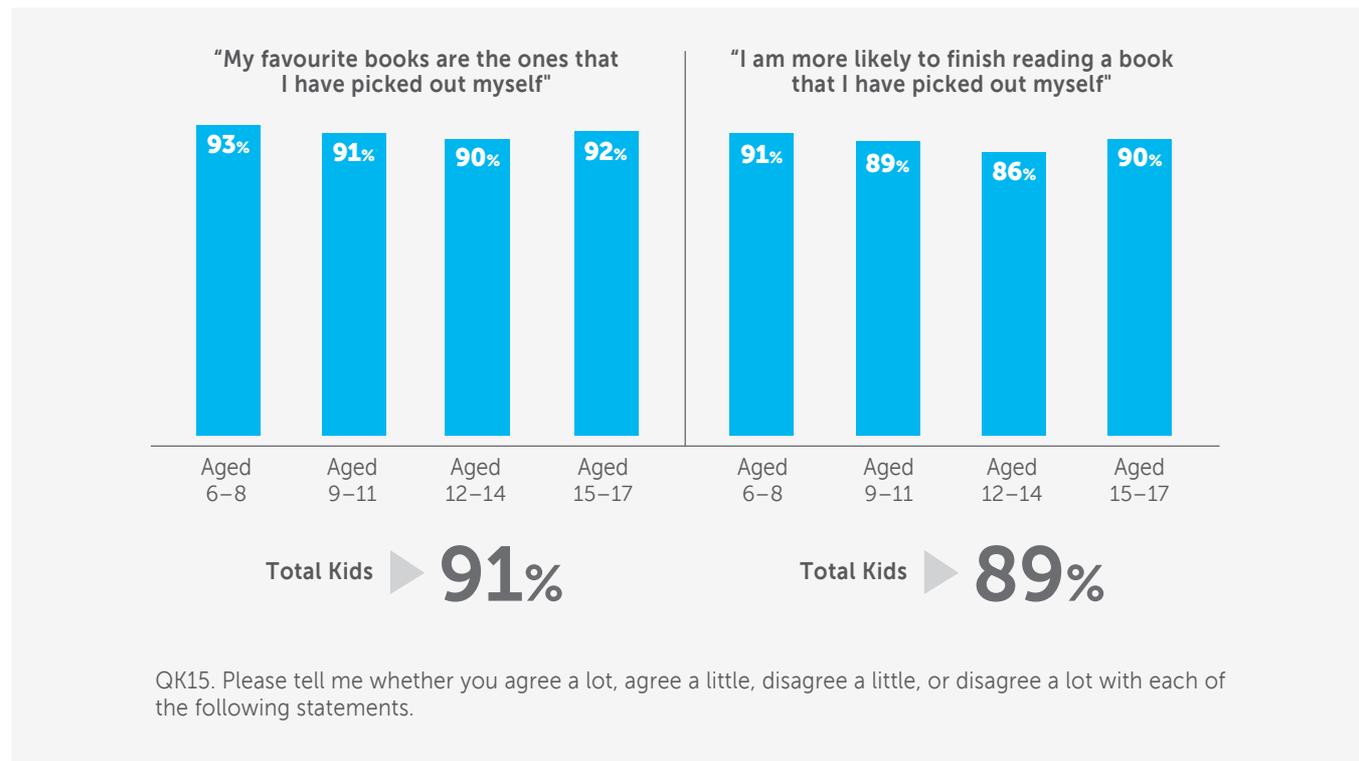
SECTION IV:

What Kids Want in Books

Children of all age groups agree: their favourite books—and the ones they are most likely to finish—are the ones they pick out themselves.

Children's Agreement with Statements

Base: Children Aged 6–17



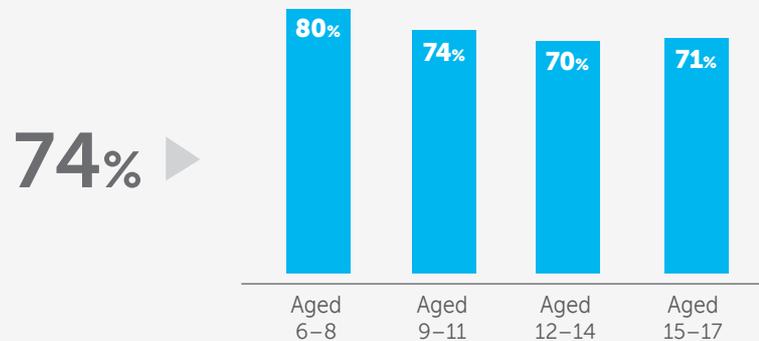
54%

of kids aged 6–17 say
the person who
**does the best
job of picking
out books** to read
for fun is **"Me"**.

Across all ages—but particularly among children aged 6–8—a majority of kids (74%) say they would read more if they could find more books that they like.

Children's Agreement with Statement:
"I would read more if I could find more books that I like"

Base: Children Aged 6–17



QK15. Please say whether you agree a lot, agree a little, disagree a little, or disagree a lot with each of the following statements.

86%

of kids aged 6–17 agree:
"I feel **proud** and
have a **sense of
accomplishment**
when I **finish
reading** a book."

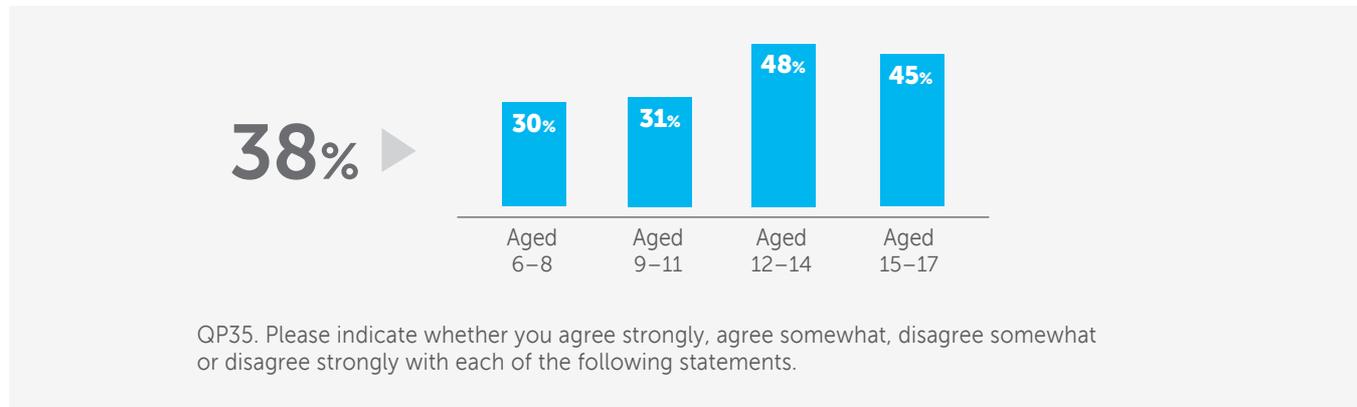
“I find it hard to find a good book to read and also have trouble staying focused.”

— 17-year-old boy, Victoria –
Metro

Nearly four in 10 parents (38%) agree that their child has trouble finding books he or she likes, especially as their child grows older.

Parents’ Agreement with Statement:
“My child has trouble finding books he/she likes”

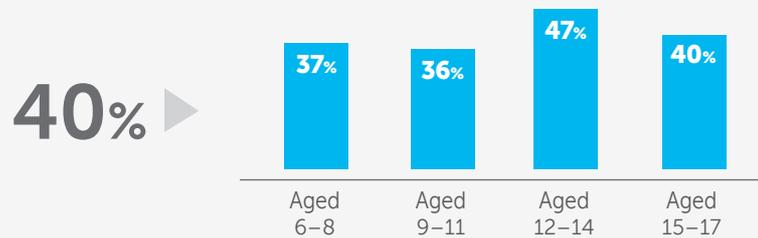
Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



Further, 40% of parents agree they need help finding books their child likes, with parents of kids aged 12–14 feeling this the most strongly.

**Parents' Agreement with Statement:
"I need help finding books my child likes"**

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



QP35. Please indicate whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with each of the following statements.

"Reading is my own personal passion. I love and enjoy it so much, and learn so much from it that I want my children to feel the same way that I do."

— Mother, 13-year-old boy,
New South Wales – Metro

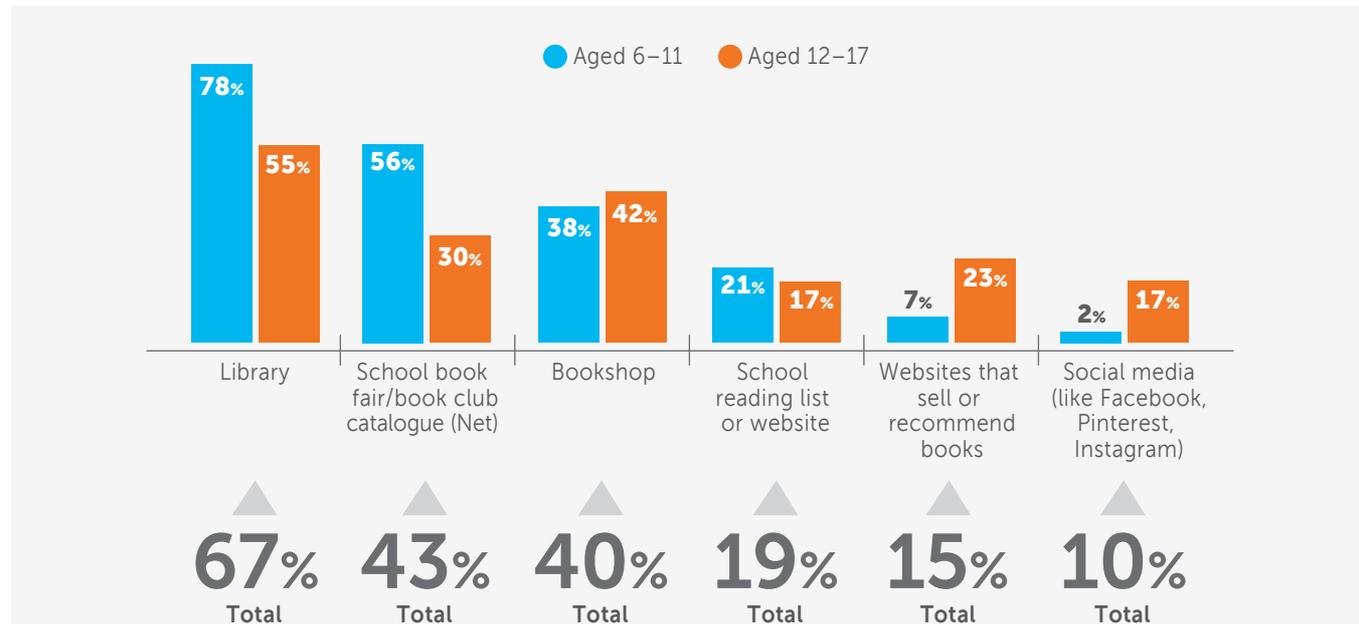
“Bring children to the library every now and then, including story time, and they start to love to go to the library.”

— Mother, 9-year-old girl,
New South Wales — Metro

Libraries, and school book fairs and book club catalogues, along with bookshops, are the leading sources children aged 6–11 use to find books to read for fun. While these sources remain important, as kids grow older, more begin to look online to find books.

Sources Children Use to Find Books to Read for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



QK44. Which of the following sources do you use to find books to read for fun?

NOTE: The net item combines “school book fair” and “school book club catalogue.” Top six items are shown in chart.

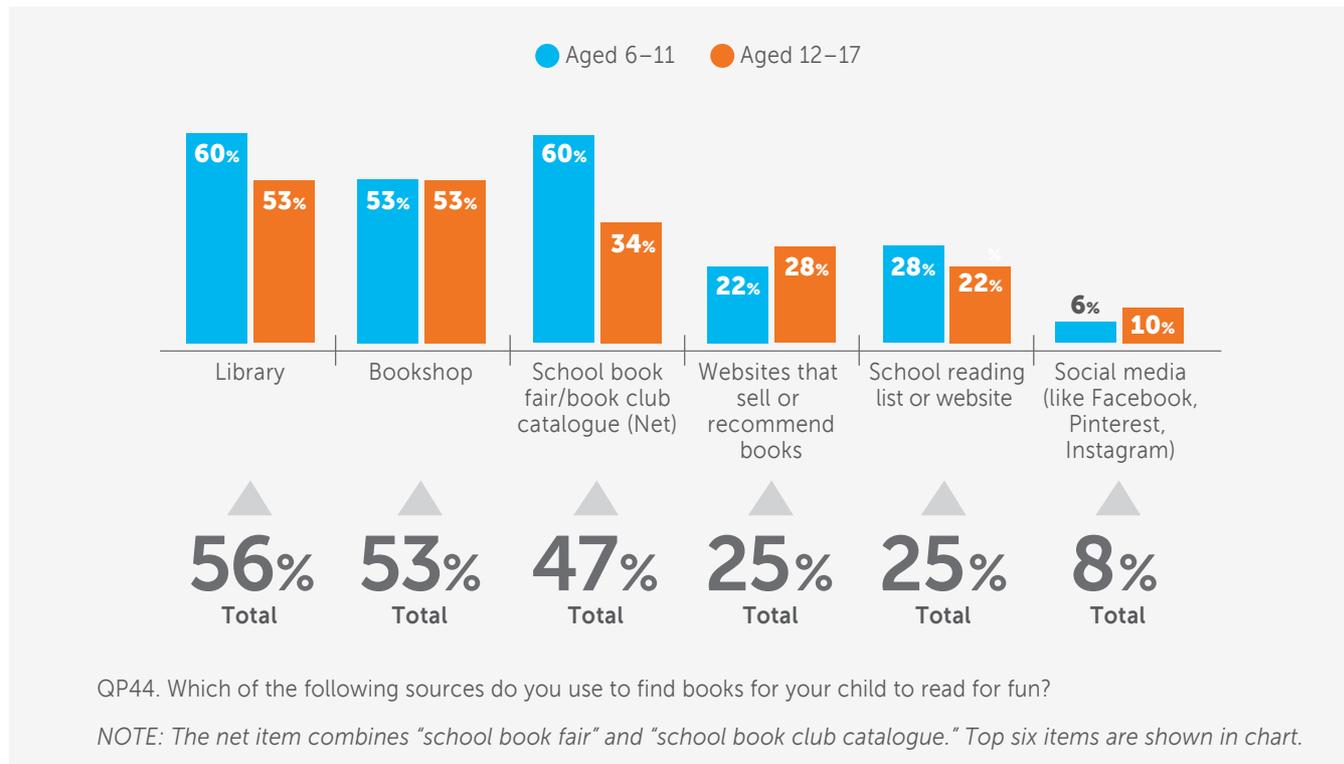
“Reading is strongly encouraged at our local school. The librarian is a fanatic on books and helps the students very much.”

— Father, 10-year-old girl,
Queensland – Regional

Similarly, libraries and bookshops are the most common sources parents use when looking for books for their child to read for fun, followed by the school book fair and book club catalogue. Parents of children younger than 12 are the most likely to use libraries, as well as school book fairs and book club catalogues.

Sources Parents Use to Help Find Books for Their Child to Read

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



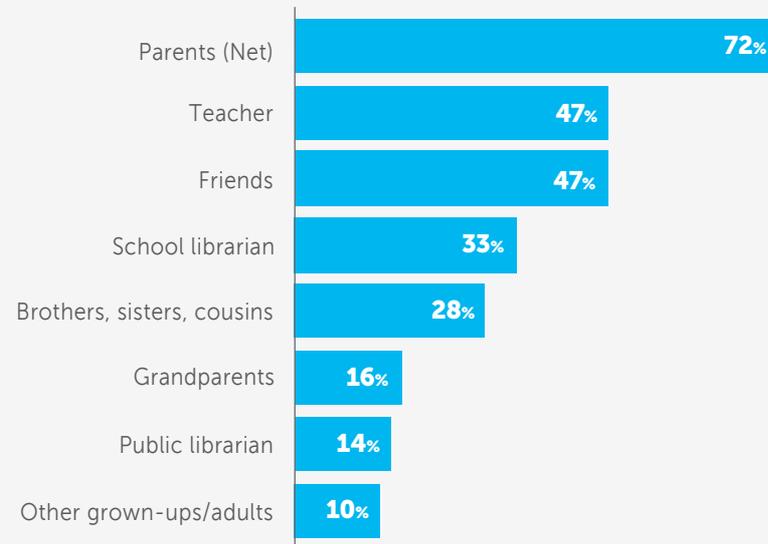
“I ask her what she likes or is interested in and then give her suggestions.”

— Mother, 10-year-old girl,
Victoria – Metro

Children commonly turn to their parents when they need ideas about which books to read for fun.

People From Whom Children Get Ideas About Which Books to Read for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



QK43. Please choose all of the people from whom you get ideas about which books to read for fun. Like we've mentioned before, this means books that are not part of your schoolwork or homework.

NOTE: The net item combines "mum" and "dad."

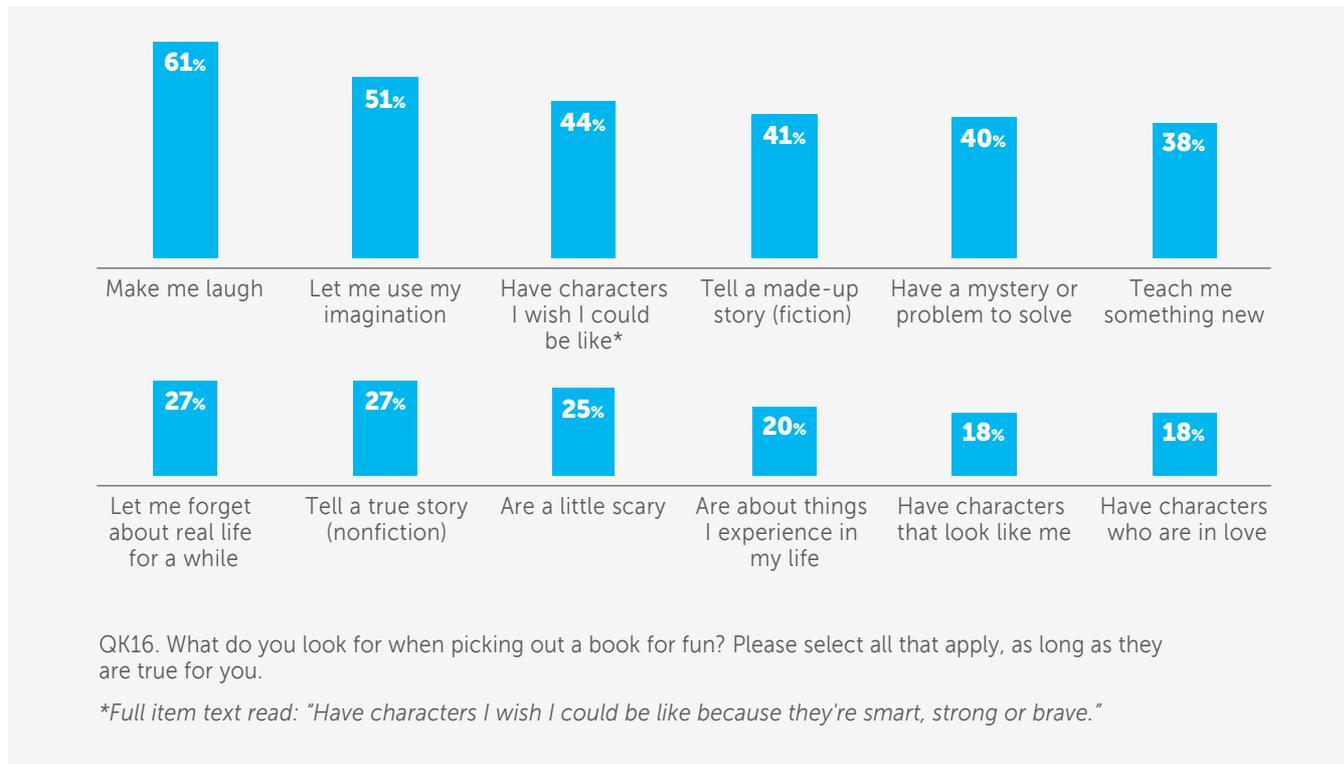
"I love books' adventures, characters and story lines. They can be happy, funny, silly, sad, scary or just weird."

— 11-year-old girl, Western Australia – Metro

Above all, children want books that make them laugh.

Things Children Look for When Picking Out a Book to Read for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



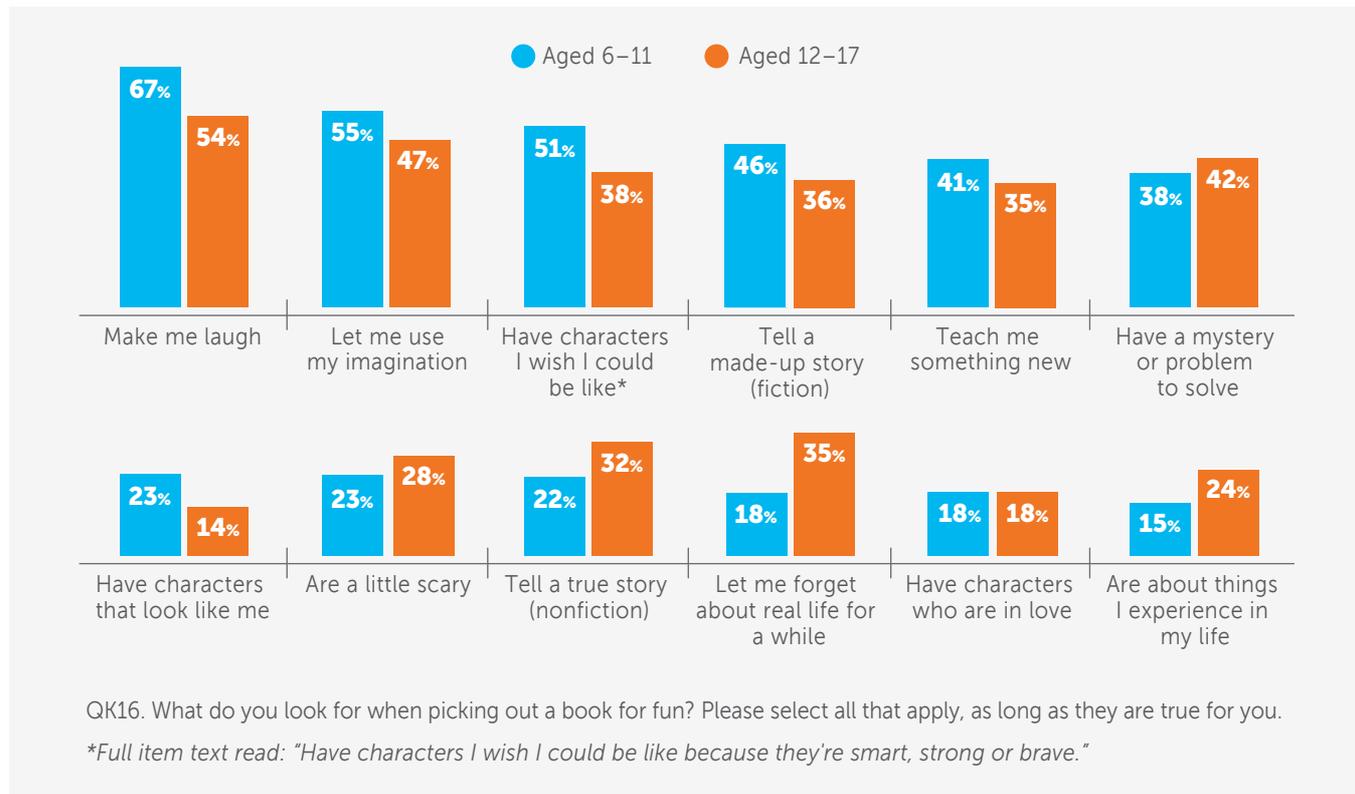
“I like adventure in books because life can sometimes get dull. I like other nonfiction and fiction books also, so I can learn more about my passions.”

— 14-year-old girl,
Queensland – Metro

What children want in books varies by age.

Things Children Look for When Picking Out a Book to Read for Fun

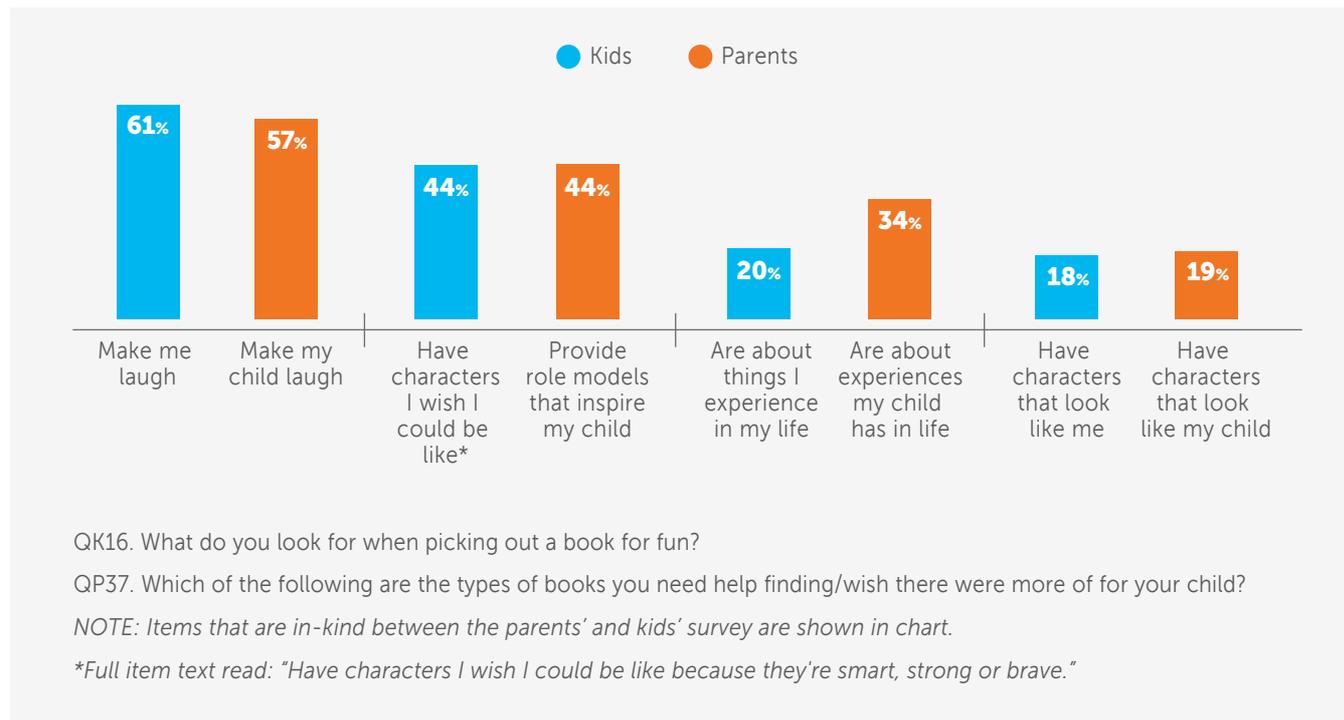
Base: Children Aged 6–17



Parents often want in books for their children the same things as kids want for themselves.

Comparison of Things Children Want in Books to Things Parents Want in Books for Their Kids

Base: Children Aged 6–17 and Parents of Children Aged 6–17



"I would rather him happily read something funny and engaging than have to force him to read something he just doesn't want to. Funny books grab you right at the start."

— Mother, 12-year-old boy, New South Wales – Metro

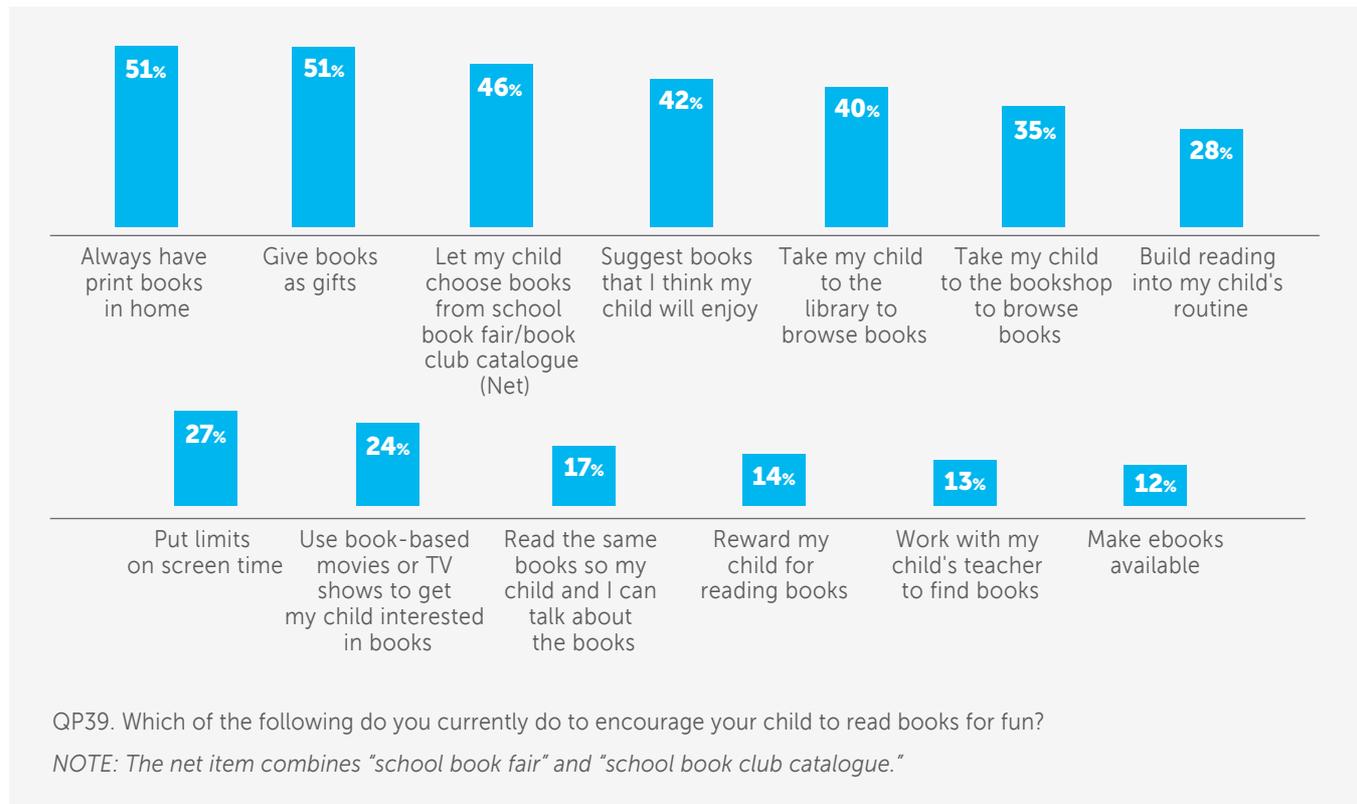
“Sometimes it’s fun if we both read the same book and then discuss the main themes and what we enjoyed or thought interesting about the book.”

— Mother, 14-year-old girl, Victoria – Metro

Parents are most likely to encourage their child to read by making print books accessible and giving books as gifts.

Things Parents Do to Encourage Their Child to Read Books for Fun

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



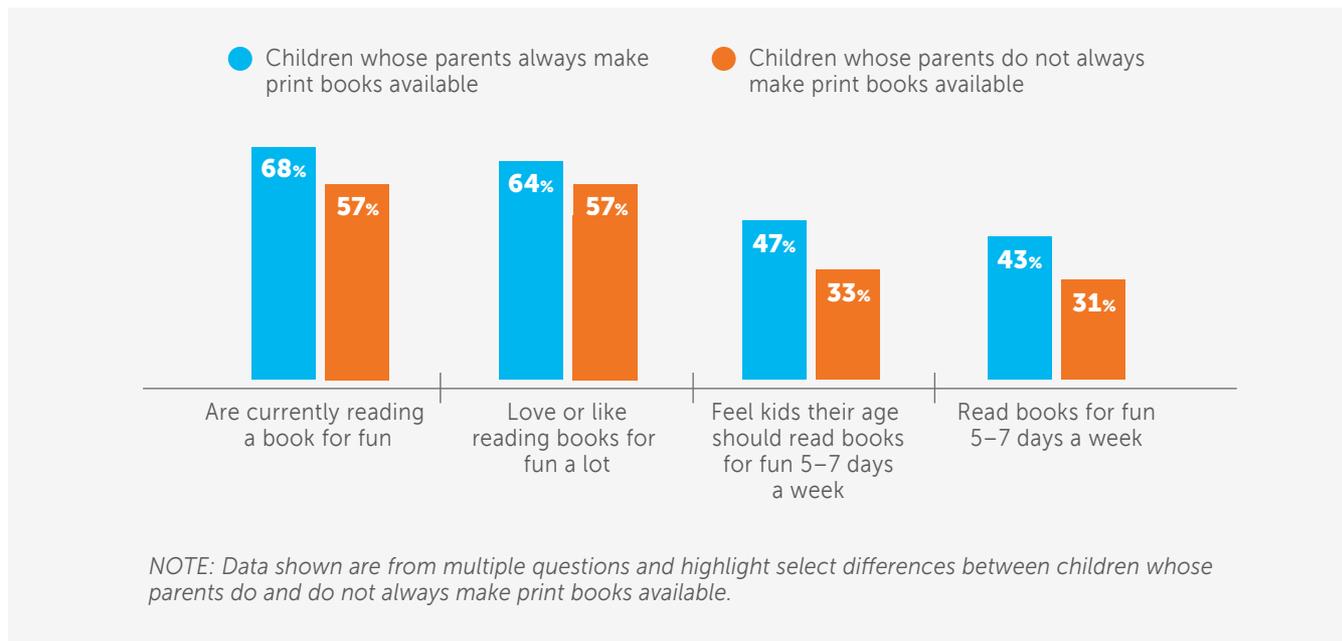
“I enjoy time alone when it’s just me and the book.”

— 16-year-old girl, New South Wales – Metro

Children whose parents encourage reading by always making print books available are more likely to be currently and frequently reading a book for fun, to love or like reading books for fun a lot, and to think kids their age should be reading frequently.

Children’s Behaviours and Views on Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



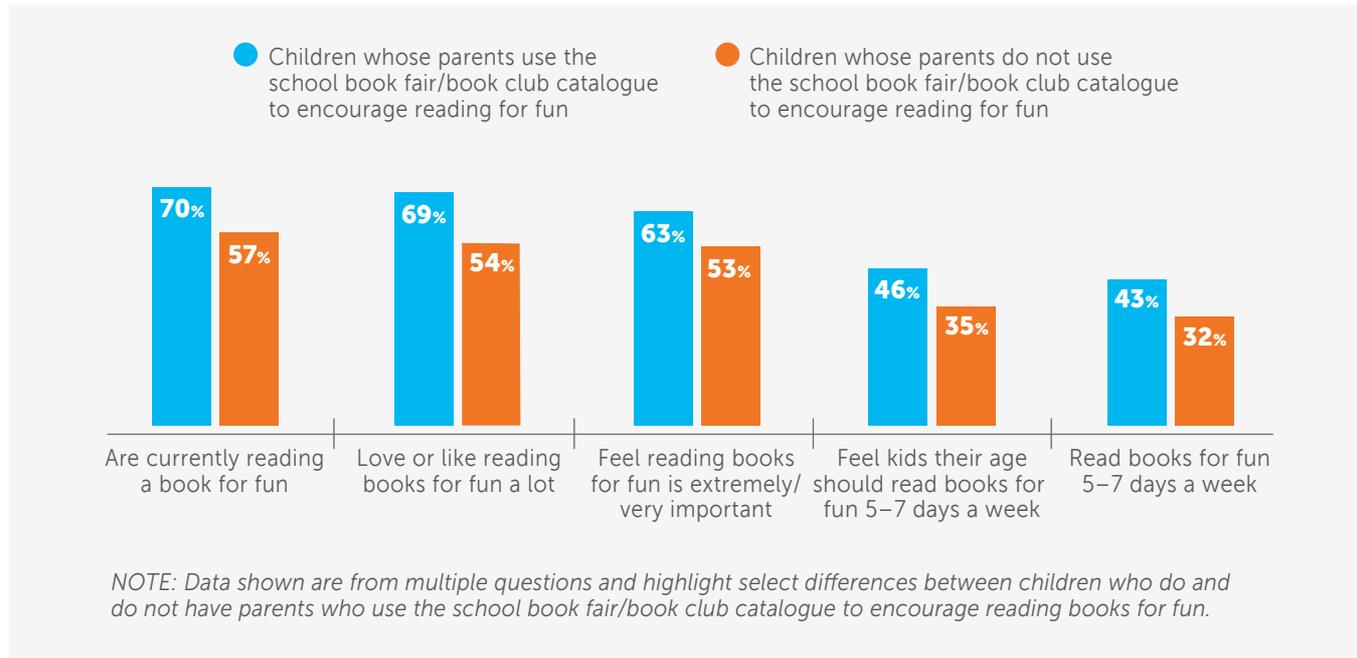
“After I’ve read a book I can recommend it to one of my friends and then we can talk about it. I think that it’s a great skill for children to have because they will need to be able to read for pretty much their whole entire life.”

— 11-year-old boy, New South Wales – Regional

Children whose parents use the school book fair or book club catalogue to encourage reading books for fun are more likely to be currently reading a book for fun, to enjoy reading, to think reading is important, and to read books for fun frequently.

Children’s Behaviours and Views on Reading Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17



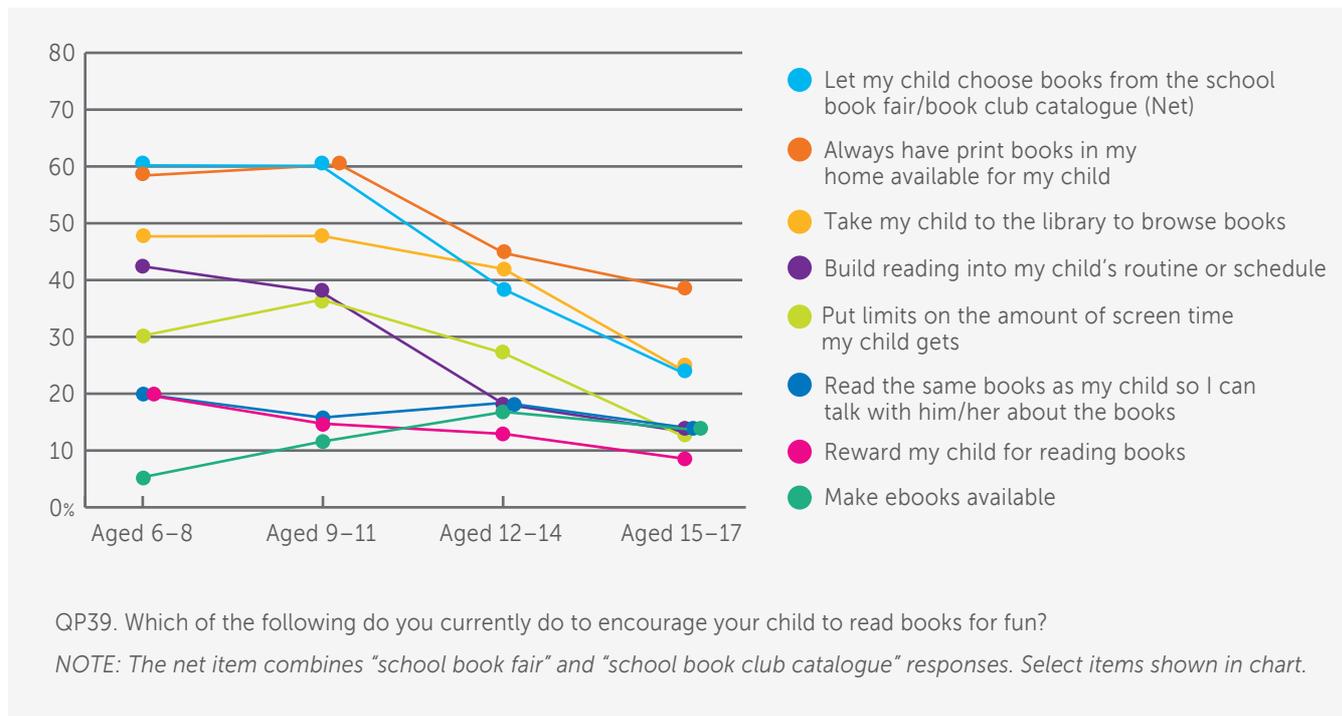
“It’s a bit harder to get her motivated to read these days than in the past.”

— Father, 9-year-old girl,
Victoria – Metro

As children grow older, parents are less likely to engage in activities that encourage reading.

Things Parents Do to Encourage Their Child to Read Books for Fun

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



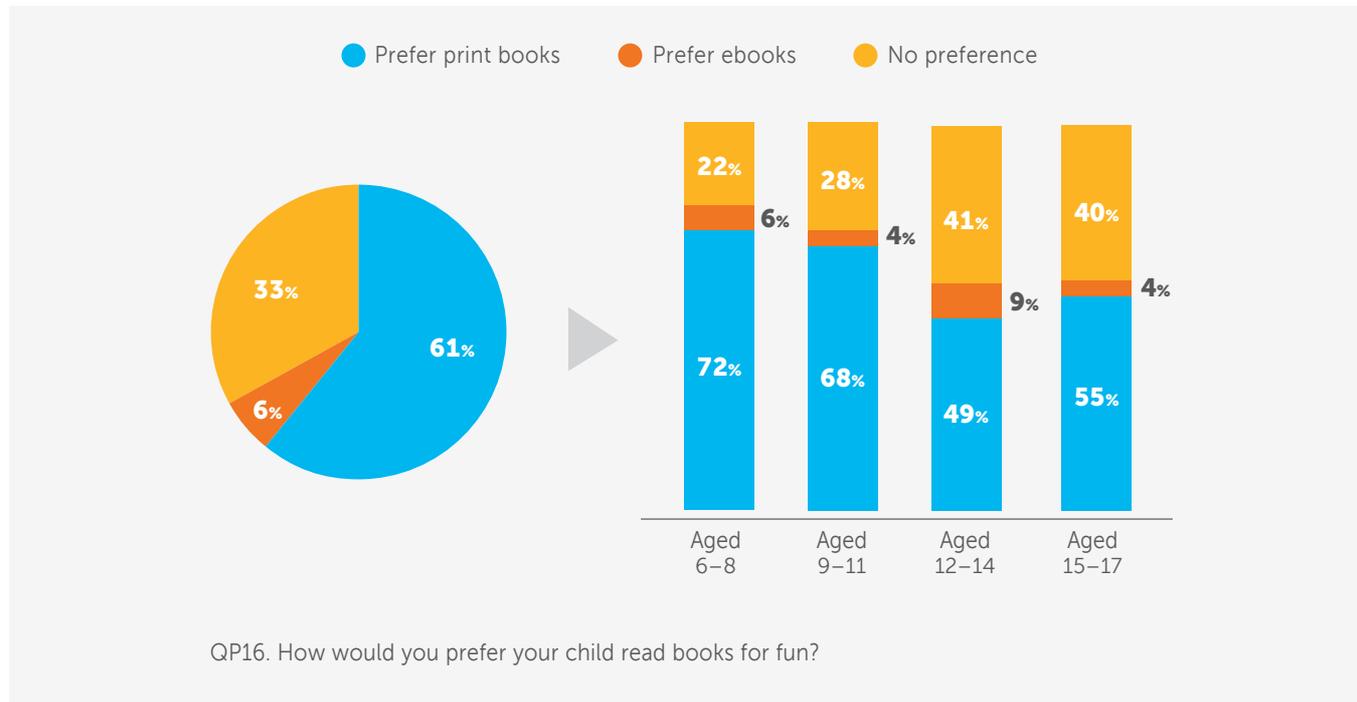
“Teaching kids to read print books encourages reading, without encouraging ‘screen time’. I personally prefer a physical book to hold, this is an experience I encourage for both my children.”

— Mother, 1-year-old boy, New South Wales – Metro

Parents of older children are more likely to say they do not have a preference as to whether their kids read books for fun in print vs. ebooks. However, seven in 10 parents of children aged 6–11 (72%) prefer that their kids read in print.

Parents’ Book Preferences for Their Child: Print Books vs. eBooks

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17



SPOTLIGHT:

Print Books in a Digital World

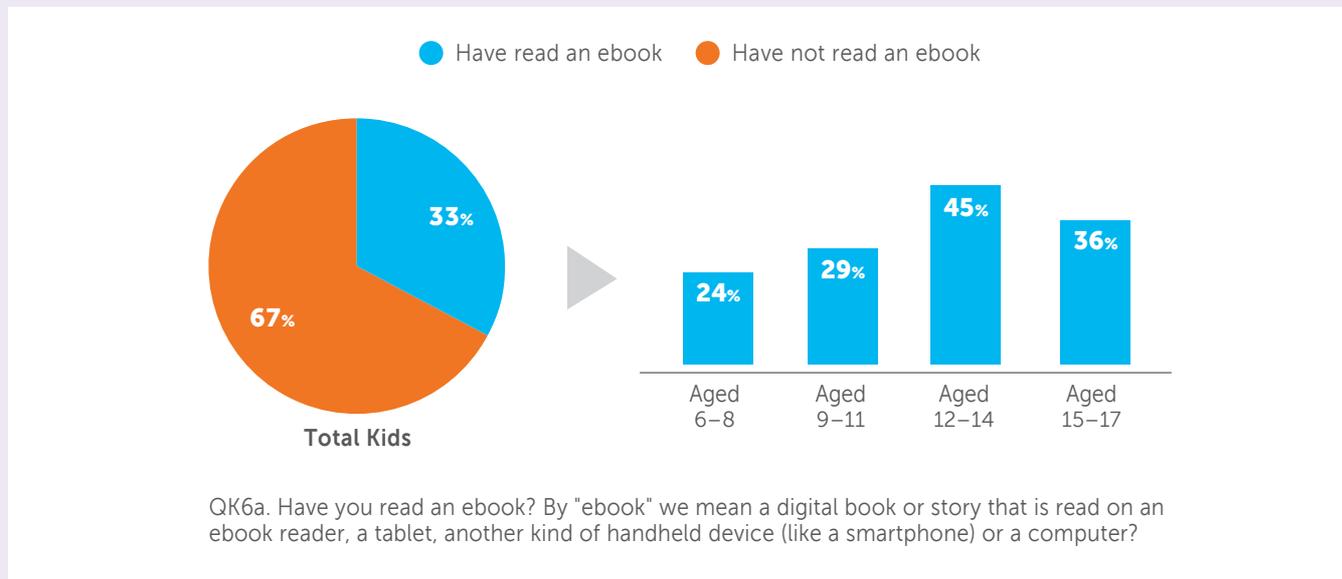
One-third of children (33%) have read an ebook, with kids aged 12–17 being most likely to have done so.

“Digital devices will hopefully let him choose more books as he can do this whenever he wants to.”

—Father, 12-year-old boy,
Queensland – Regional

Percentage of Children Who Have Read an eBook

Base: Children Aged 6–17

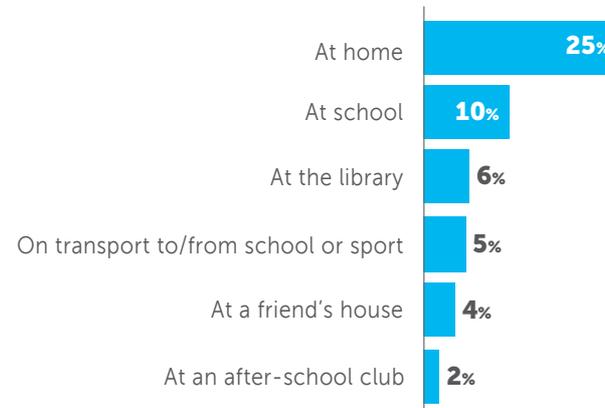


SPOTLIGHT: Print Books in a Digital World

Children are mostly reading ebooks at home.

Places Children Read eBooks

Base: Children Aged 6–17



QK28. When you read ebooks, do you read them...

39%

of parents with kids
aged 6–17

have personally
read an ebook.

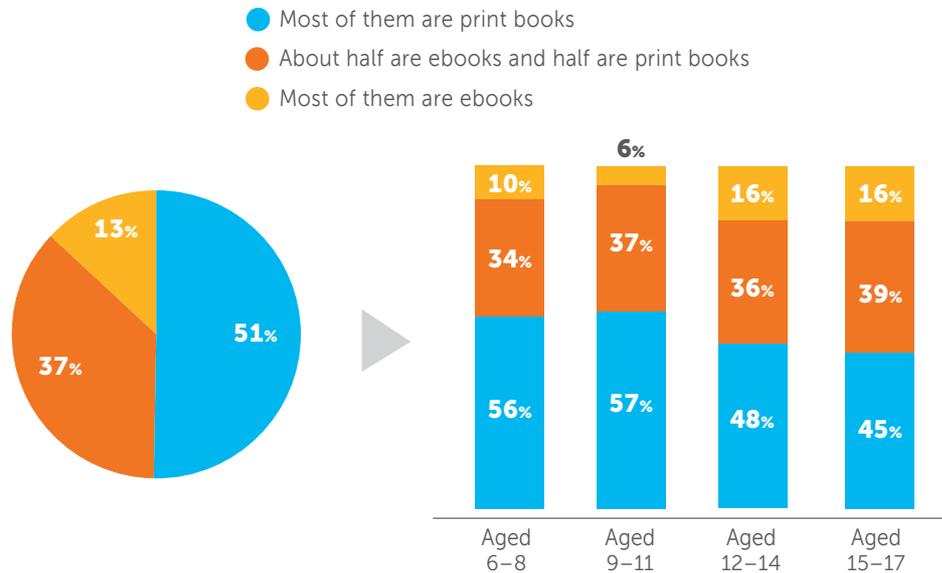
“She readily seeks out books, both on the laptop and printed.”

— Grandfather, 14 year-old girl, Queensland – Metro

Half of children who read ebooks (51%) say that most of the books they read for fun are in print, but more than one-third (37%) read about half ebooks and half print books.

How Children Read Books for Fun

Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Have Read an eBook



QK29a. Which of the following best describes the books you read for fun?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 33% of kids who have read an ebook.

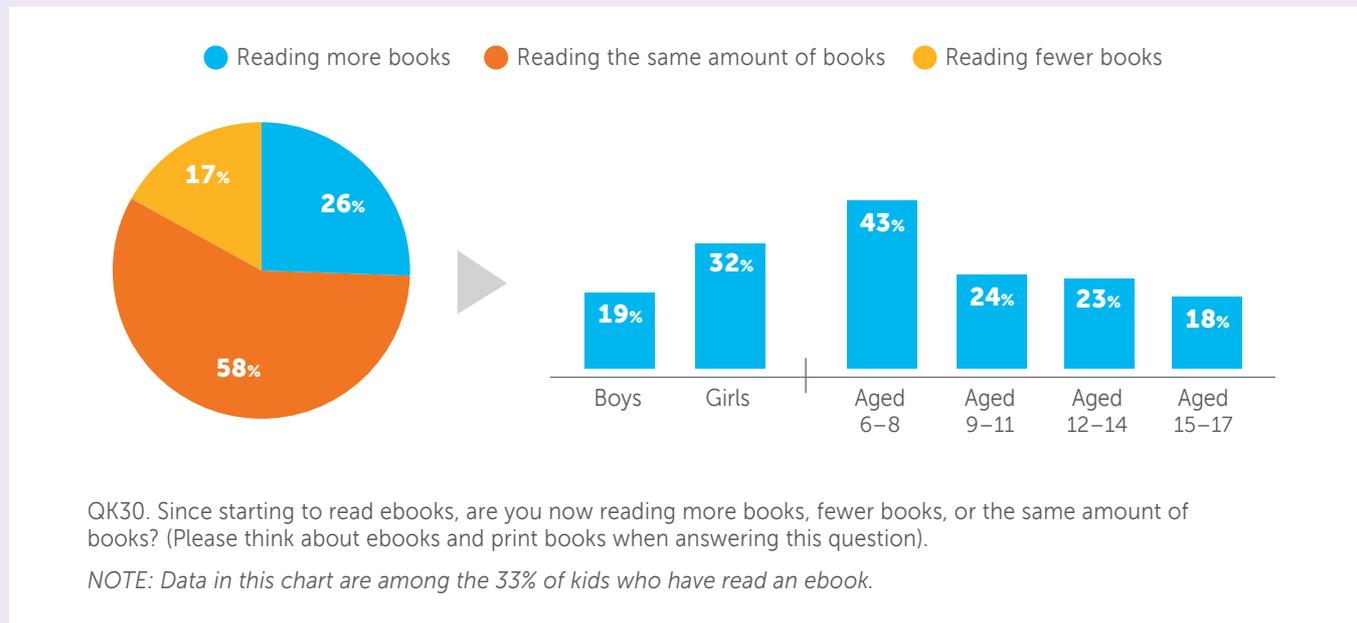
SPOTLIGHT: Print Books in a Digital World

“If she has fun reading, she will read more books.”

— Father, 6-year-old girl, ACT

One-quarter of children who have read an ebook (26%) say they are reading more books since starting to read digitally. Girls and kids aged 6–8 are the most likely to say this.

Impact Reading eBooks Has Had on the Amount of Books Children Read
Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Have Read an eBook



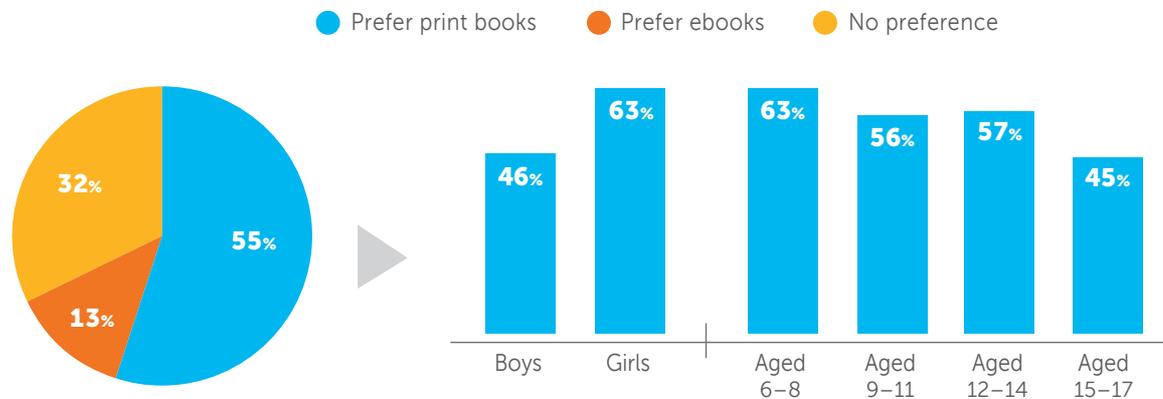
“It’s relaxing and easier on the eyes than screens.”

—14-year-old boy, South Australia – Regional

More than half of children who have read ebooks (55%) prefer to read print books, with 6–8 year olds being the most likely to feel this way. Boys are less likely than girls to prefer print books.

How Children Prefer to Read Books: Print vs. eBooks

Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Have Read an eBook



QK29b. In general, would you rather read...

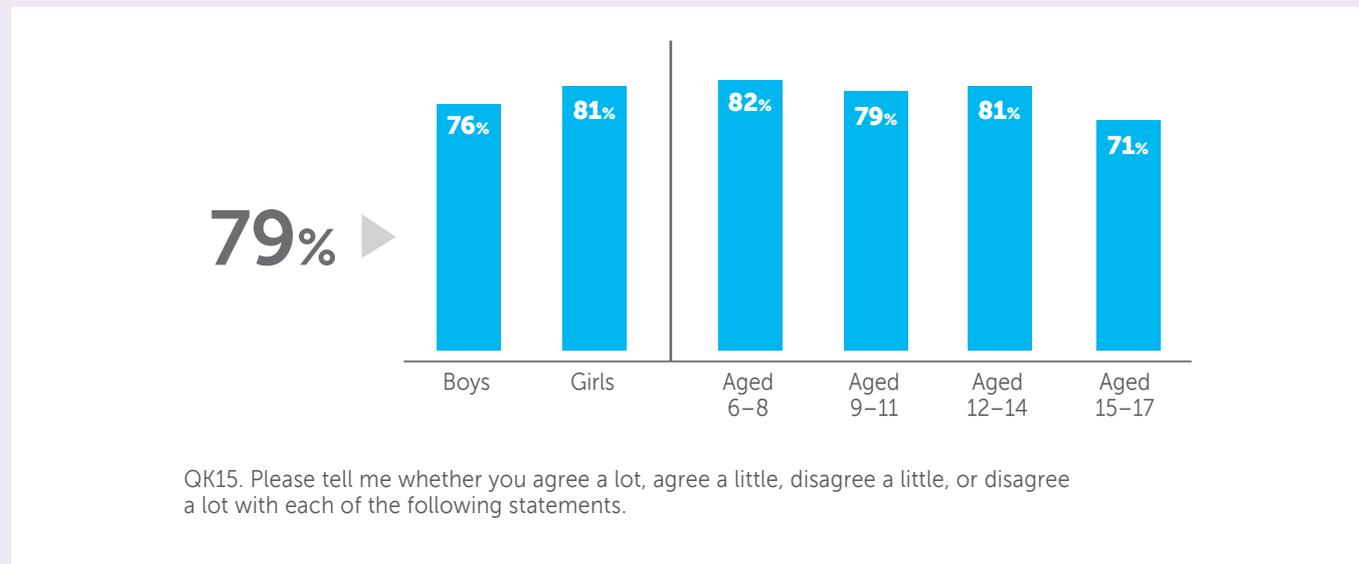
NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 33% of kids who have read an ebook.

SPOTLIGHT: Print Books in a Digital World

The majority of children (79%) agree they will always want to read print books, even though there are ebooks available.

Children's Agreement with Statement: "I'll always want to read books printed on paper even though there are ebooks available"

Base: Children Aged 6–17



54%

of parents with kids aged 6–17 and who have read an ebook say

that when they read personally, they prefer to read books in print.

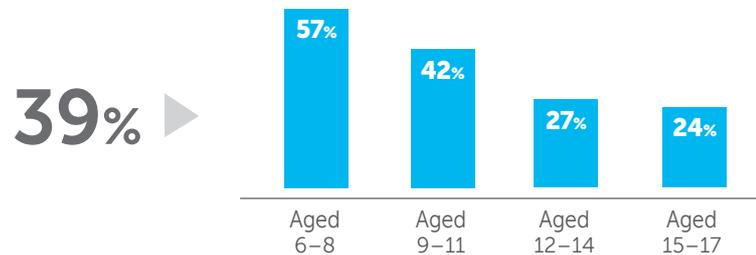
“Books are my way of escaping my normal life.”

— 12-year-old girl, Western Australia – Metro

Among children who have not read an ebook, four in 10 (39%) express interest in reading an ebook, with younger kids being more interested than older children.

Interest in Reading eBooks

Base: Children Aged 6–17 Who Have Not Read an eBook



QK6b. Are you interested in reading ebooks [ADDED FOR KIDS AGED 6–8: or stories] on any of the types of electronic devices mentioned in the last question?

NOTE: Data in this chart are among the 67% of kids who have not read an ebook.

SPOTLIGHT: Print Books in a Digital World

“My daughter reads both ebooks and print books, but prefers hardcover books and likes to collect book series. She has many bookcases!”

— Mother, 14-year-old girl, Victoria – Metro

Home libraries are predominantly composed of print books, many of which are children’s books. In homes with ebooks, half of parents (51%) say the ebook collection is mostly books for adults.

Average Number of Print and eBooks in Home

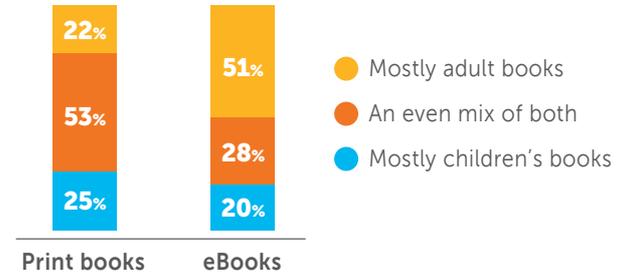
Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17

159 Print books **43** eBooks

QP54. How many print books are in your home?
QP55. How many ebooks does your family own?

Percentage of Children’s vs. Adult Books in Home

Base: Parents of Children Aged 6–17 Who Say There Are Print Books and eBooks in Their Home



QP56. Which describes your print book collection best?
QP57. Which describes your ebook collection best?

What Kids Want In Books

When Reading for Fun, Kids Aged 6–17 Say
THEY WANT BOOKS THAT:



61%
Make me laugh



51% Let me use my imagination



44% Have characters I wish I could be like because they're smart, strong or brave



41% Tell a made-up story



40% Have a mystery or problem to solve



38% Teach me something new



91% of kids aged 6–17 say My favourite books are the ones I have picked out myself.

Kids Aged 6–8

Are more likely than older kids to want: books that **have smart, strong or brave characters**



Favourites: *The Treehouse Books*, *Roald Dahl*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*

Kids Aged 9–11

Are more likely than younger kids to want: books that **have a mystery or problem to solve**

Favourites: *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Harry Potter*, *The Treehouse Books*

Kids Aged 12–14

Are more likely than younger kids to want: books about **things they experience in their life**

Favourites: *The Hunger Games*, *Harry Potter*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*

Kids Aged 15–17

Are more likely than younger kids to want: books that **tell a true story**

Favourites: *Harry Potter*, *The Hunger Games*, *Detective Books*



APPENDIX A:

Study Methodology

- The study was managed and fielded by YouGov, using their panel of Australia-based respondents.
- The sample consisted of parents with children aged 6–17 who first completed a series of questions before passing the survey on to one randomly selected child in the target age range. Additionally, a sample of parents with children aged 0–5 completed the parent-focused portion of the survey.
- 695 pairs of children and adults from the same household completed the survey, along with 358 parents of children aged 0–5.
- The survey was fielded between November 19, 2015 and November 27, 2015.
- Final data on children’s age, gender, along with household characteristics (including region and income) were examined against data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Sample balancing was applied to adjust household income to further enhance sample representativeness.

APPENDIX A:

Additional Study Methodology

- Some survey language was modified in age-appropriate ways to ensure comprehension among children aged 6–8.
- Children aged 6–8 were not asked some survey questions also due to comprehension limitations and limitations on the length of a survey appropriate for 6–8 year olds.
- Parents were invited to help young children read the survey but were asked to allow children to independently answer all questions. At the end of the survey, children were asked to record the degree to which a parent helped them with the survey. Consistent with prior research, an analysis comparing the responses of children with and without parental involvement showed no significant differences.
- Virtually all (95%) adults interviewed were the parent or stepparent of the child interviewed. Therefore, throughout this report, we refer to adult respondents as “parents.”
- Data may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

APPENDIX B:

Demographics of the Sample

Age of Child Respondents

6–8	26%
9–11	24%
12–14	25%
15–17	25%

Gender of Child Respondents

Boys Aged 6–17	50%
Girls Aged 6–17	50%

Relationship of Adult Respondent to Child

Parents of 0–17 Year Olds	
Parent (Net)	95%
Mother	62%
Father	31%
Stepmother	1%
Stepfather	1%
Other Guardian (Net)	5%

Household Income

Parents of 0–17 Year Olds	
Less than \$40K	12%
\$40K–\$60K	13%
\$61K–<\$99K	22%
\$100K–\$150K	28%
\$150K–\$250K	14%
\$250K+	4%
Prefer not to say	8%
Median	\$80K

APPENDIX C:

Subgroup Sample Sizes

Age of Child Respondents

Total	695
6–8	177
9–11	175
12–14	169
15–17	174

Gender of Child Respondents

Boys Aged 6–17	349
Girls Aged 6–17	346

Age of Child Respondents within Gender

Boys Aged 6–8	88
Girls Aged 6–8	89
Boys Aged 9–11	87
Girls Aged 9–11	88
Boys Aged 12–14	87
Girls Aged 12–14	82
Boys Aged 15–17	87
Girls Aged 15–17	87

Age of Child that Parents Answered About

Parents of Children Aged 0–17	1,053
Parents of Children Aged 0–5	358
Parents of Children Aged 0–2	180
Parents of Children Aged 3–5	178
Parents of Children Aged 6–17	695

APPENDIX C:

Subgroup Sample Sizes (continued)

Reading Frequency of Child Aged 6–17

Frequent Readers (read books for fun 5–7 days a week)	245
Moderately Frequent Readers (read books for fun 1–4 days a week)	279
Infrequent Readers (read books for fun less than 1 day a week)	171

Reading Frequency of Child Within Age

Frequent Readers Aged 6–11	177
Infrequent Readers Aged 6–11	39
Frequent Readers Aged 12–17	68
Infrequent Readers Aged 12–17	132

Children Aged 6–17 Who Read Independently with Their Class or School

Total	308
Boys	156
Girls	152

Children Aged 6–17 Who Have Read an eBook

Total	221
6–8	42
9–11	42
12–14	71
15–17	66

To view the report online, visit
www.scholastic.com.au/readingreport

