

Read your child a book this Christmas, says Children's Minister

Families have been urged to reach for a book this Christmas in a bid to boost early literacy skills.

With gadgets and technology likely to be top of most children's Christmas lists, Minister for Children and Families Michelle Donelan has urged parents and grandparents not to forget that reading is an important Christmas pastime too, opening up "a world of learning and imagination" for the family.

Minister for Children and Families Michelle Donelan said:

All children deserve the opportunity to enjoy reading. The act of reading a book can build a child's vocabulary, spark their imagination, and help set them up for the rest of their lives. Families have an important role to play in encouraging this.

This festive period is a wonderful opportunity to spend more time reading with children and bonding over your favourite stories. I still remember being read to by my family at Christmas, and the many wonderful hours spent devouring new stories. Reading to your children this Christmas will not only help them develop a vital life skill, but also give them a passport to a world of learning and imagination.

Reading at home is important to a child's development. Findings from the National Literacy Trust's survey of 56,906 UK children released earlier this month, found that those who own their own books at home are six times more likely to be above the reading level expected of them and three times more likely to enjoy reading than those who do not.

Jonathan Douglas, Chief Executive of the National Literacy Trust, said:

Books have the power to transform children's reading skills, enjoyment and mental wellbeing. Yet far too many children are missing out on the chance to reach their full potential, simply because they don't have a book of their own at home. What's more, our research shows that the more books children have, the better equipped they are to enjoy reading and go on to succeed in life. The National Literacy Trust has taken huge strides to get books into the hands of children who need them most.

The National Literacy Trust has also launched its own list of recommended books for children of all ages. For more information on the importance of home learning and activities to encourage reading from new born to five year

olds, please visit our Hungry Little Minds resource page.