

## **'But Mom, I Hate to Read!' — Tips for Reluctant Readers** **By Linda Streaan, GreatSchools Managing Editor**

Show your reluctant reader that books can help him do the things he loves.

1. Connect reading with your child's passion.

Whether it's soccer, skateboarding or space travel, get a subscription to a magazine on that topic. Also consider general magazines for children, such as *Highlights*, *Nickleodeon* or *Time for Kids*. If it has his name on the address label, a magazine becomes a personal invitation to read.

2. Tell your child a joke or a riddle — and pull out the book where you found it.

Joke books, riddle books and books of sports trivia are irresistible to some of the most reluctant readers. Keep a book like this handy in the car, in the kitchen, at the doctor's office, on vacation or at the ballpark.

3. Read books with your child that have silly drawings or humor only a kid would love.

You might not like the humor of the *Captain Underpants* series, but your 9- to 12-year-old may love it.

4. Show your child that books are the keys to achieving a desirable skill.

Does she want to put sequins on her jeans? Does he want to do magic tricks? Does he want to learn to care for a new pet? Show them how books can give step-by-step instructions.

5. Introduce series books.

Some may not be great literature, but they can entice a less confident or skilled reader because of their predictable themes and familiar characters. Reading books like the *Encyclopedia Brown* series can help your child prepare for more substantial reading.

6. Avoid Pitfalls As You Encourage Your Reluctant Reader

If you have a son who is a reluctant reader, ask your librarian which authors have a following among boys. Walter Dean Myers, for example, writes about a wide range of topics from basketball to biography. Many of this award-winning author's books are more appropriate for teen-agers. *Slam!*, published by Scholastic Paperbacks, is about a Harlem high school boy who loves basketball and struggles with school. *Shooter*, published by Amistad, focuses on the aftermath of a high school shooting. But Myers also writes books for younger readers. Among them: *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*, published by Scholastic Paperbacks, and *Smiffy Blue, Ace Crime Detective: The Case of the Missing Ruby and Other Stories*, Rebound by Sagebrush.