

Kids need more interaction at storytime

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A U.S. professor says parents should rethink the way they read to their children, replacing sleepy bedtime stories with interaction.

Jennifer Dobbs, an assistant professor of developmental studies at Purdue University, says reading technique may be just as important as the time spent together.

"When we think of reading, the traditional bedtime story where the child cuddles up next to the parent and then falls asleep as he is read to usually comes to mind," Dobbs said Wednesday in a news release. "That's a beautiful picture and it has its place, but from the learning perspective it is kind of like reading as a tranquilizer."

Dobbs recommends parents practice dialogic reading, a more active form of reading that encourages input from the child. Dialogic reading has been shown to accelerate children's learning of pre-reading skills, better equipping them for success in school.

"Open-ended questions allow children to decide what they want to talk about," she said. "Children learn better if they are interested in what they are learning about."

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