**Creating Your Home Library**

Every family should have a home library; it demonstrates to children of all ages that books matter enough to have an honored place in the home. A home library can help you encourage your child to choose reading and to discover the joys and pleasure of reading from an early age. A home library can build a strong foundation for reading, which has lifelong benefits for your child both in and out of school.

A home library requires two things: space and reading materials. The following pointers can help you create a home library that you and your child will enjoy.

**Creating the Space**

* Find a space for the library. It can be in your child’s bedroom, in a small corner of your living room, or in another small area.
* Create a book storage area. Books can be stored on bookshelves, on brick and board shelves, in baskets, or on plastic crates or stacking cubes.
* Create a space for your child to sit and read if you have the room. Child-size chairs or beanbag chairs and a good lamp can create a cozy space for reading.

**Stocking the Collection**

* Help your child select books or other reading materials for the collection. Books can be purchased inexpensively through school book clubs or book fairs, through local library or yard sales, and online at sites like Book Closeout ([www.bookcloseouts.com](http://www.bookcloseouts.com)). For younger children, provide sturdy board books.
* Virtually any kind of reading material can become part of the home library. Newspapers, magazines, song books, catalogs, pamphlets, and almanacs are just a few of the kinds of print materials that children can enjoy.
* Give books or magazine subscriptions as birthday and holiday gifts.
* Understand that the quality of eh collection is more important than the quantity. Include books that children love and will read over and over. Provide books at a variety of reading levels.
* Involve your child in creating their own books that can be added to the collection. Your child can write and illustrate his or her own stories in blank books that can be purchased inexpensively, or on construction paper that you bind with staples, tape, or string.
* Have your child demonstrate pride in his or her books by creating decorative bookplates for their books. On the bookplate he or she can write “from the library of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”. These can be glued into the front cover of each book. Or your child can decorate the inside cover or title page with his or her name.

**Displaying the Collection**

* Display books with covers facing out. Group books together by your child’s favorite topics. Put books for younger children on the lowest shelves.
* Display favorite objects next to books if there is room. For example, you might place seashells collected at the beach next to a book on oceans.
* Assist your child in alphabetizing books by author or arranging books by genres. This helps organize the collection and provides practice in important skills.

From *Independent Reading: Creating Lifelong Readers* by Barbara Moss and Terrell A. Young.