

Creative ideas to engage parents through books

A National Literacy Trust Membership resource

Here are a host of creative ideas to get you started in celebrating books and bringing the whole-school community together to share and explore the joy and power of reading, sharing and owning books. Mix and match, be led by parents' interests and ideas, run one off workshops and embed regular sessions to give your pupils the gift of reading.

Christmas craft workshop

Why not encourage the gift of reading at Christmas by inviting parents and pupils to a weekly Christmas craft workshop? Make bookmarks to decorate and give as gifts; bring old books to recycle by making them a new book jacket complete with a personal review and blurb; or even make mini book Christmas tree decorations with a simple eight-fold template or zigzag book.

Dads days

Have a special day in the library once a week where dads and grandads come to read stories at lunchtime. Supply a special box of books or rather encourage dads to bring along whatever they like to read to share with pupils.

Book gossip group

Invite parents along to a regular weekly book gossip group but not your normal adult book group. Instead supply a selection of engaging children's literature, picture books and poetry books for discussion.

Parents will not only get to know a wider range of great authors and illustrators for their own children but learn how engaging simple book talk can be for all. Whether exploring the multi-layered texts of Anthony Browne; the amazing wordless picture books of Aaron Becker or the hilarious adult cultural references written into books like Timmy Failure – something for all.

Pet days

Have a 'read to your pet day' once a week where families can bring in their pet to the library or classroom and parents can read with pupils to the furriest members of the family!

Family film fun

Practical workshops and clubs are always a hit with parents. Simple film making on iPads or Movie Maker can be a super collaborative experience.

- Watch a range of book trailers: [World Book Day](#) has a host to choose from
- In small groups choose a favourite book
- Story board a simple frame by frame trailer of shots and get filming. Some great tips can be found [here](#)

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- You might even be able to host your own BAFTA awards to choose your favourites in assembly

Book making workshop

An addictive and fascinating workshop can be designing, writing and making your own books. From simple zigzag books to more complicated pop ups and concertinas, book making can engage pupils and parents of all ages. At the same time they provide stunning displays and create books that families will treasure and add to the family book collection to give joy for years to come.

See Paul Johnson's amazing work at the [BookArt Project](#) and a range of his practical titles and templates to help get going.

The dangerous dads club

If you have ever witnessed a grown man suddenly reverting to a seven-year old when presented with a Meccano or Scalextric set, then you will know that the old insult about men never growing up is true. This inner rascal presents us with a great opportunity to involve men in learning through play. The book *The Dangerous Book for Boys* by Conn and Hal Iggulden is packed full of fantastic ideas, activities and learning opportunities which are presented in a beautifully designed way. It can be used as the basis for an adventure club for boys and blokes to get together and discover life beyond the computer screen.

Here are just some of the great ideas that could be used to entice them to your weekly club and do homework as well:

- Making a battery
- Making a go-cart
- Building a tree house
- Juggling
- Extraordinary stories
- Create the invincible Conker
- Robot Wars

Encourage dads to bring along practical books, guides and manuals they love to share with pupils. Together they could create their own manuals and guides linked to activities.

The graphic novel and comic factor

Look for artistic parent volunteers to run a club reading and creating their own comic books and graphic novels.

Collect a range of classic comic books old and new for display.

For younger pupils, the amazing [Phoenix Comic](#) is a fabulous weekly resource that could be delivered direct to your group each week.

Get your pupils to design their own graphic novels using [Comic Master](#) (free online software) or create your own stories at [Comic Life](#).

Develop your own Richard & Judy

Build stakeholder relationships by inviting governors, staff and parents to an adult book club.

Providing wine and nibbles and perhaps a focus like shadowing the [Costa Book Awards](#) or even their short stories awards is always a good idea.

Any kind of books can be chosen – you might have a cookery book club where Mary Berry's latest offering is under scrutiny...

Class anthologies

Carry out class surveys at home of the top family books in that year group and create a corridor long display of the top titles across the key stages – mini visual anthologies of their favourite family books.

Year 3's top family books are...

Reading journeys

Creating lasting, engaging displays which inspire discussion between pupils and parents are a winner.

Why not challenge family members to represent their own reading journeys through the years in a creative way. Perhaps a collage or a series of book jackets or illustrations. What were they reading at say age 5, age 10, age 15, 30, etc.?

Make a whole school display – a great discussion point for the playground.

Ask your parents!

What are your parents interested in?

- Would they like to raise money for new books?
- Run whole school reading competitions to raise money for organisations like Book Aid International?
- Run a monthly book swap?
- Develop a creative writing workshop for parents?
- Make their own picture books for reception?
- Create story sacks around books?

Have a coffee morning and survey your parents to find out what their ideas might be...and their hidden talents!