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when Reading to Young Children***

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Come to Life to Read to Them***



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Toronto, ONTARIO – According to a new study conducted by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of Fisher-Price, virtually all Canadian parents of children aged 12 and younger, who have/do read to their children, think it is important to “make sure your children are having fun and enjoying reading” (98% - 90% “extremely important”), and to “have their children read to them” (97% - 84% “extremely important”). Ninety-four percent think it is important to “read out loud to children” (86% “extremely important”), while 91% think it’s important to “talk about letters by name and sound” (81% “extremely important”).

As for how they read to their children, eight in ten (80%) Canadian parents of children age 12 and younger, who have or do read to their children, use their finger to point to words and pictures on a page to help them follow along, and two-thirds (65%) encourage(d) their children to use their fingers to point to words as they read. In fact, seven in ten (69%) say it’s important to “use your finger to follow along with the words in the book” (45% “extremely important”), and 62% say it’s important to “have their children follow along with their finger as they read to them” (45% “extremely important”). Seven in ten (71%) agree that, “using a finger is a natural and/or effective way for a child to follow along in a book” (51% “strongly agree”), while 62% disagree that “using a finger is an awkward or difficult way for a child to follow along in a book” (44% “strongly disagree”).

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As for other ways to follow along, half (47%) of this group of parents agree that “using a pointer such as a stylus or pencil is a distracting way for a child to follow along in a book” (26% “strongly agree”), while 45% disagree that “using a pointer such as a stylus or pencil is a natural and/or effective way for a child to follow along in a book” (27% “strongly disagree”).

One-third (35%) of parents of children age 12 and younger who have or do read to their children say the one thing that has encouraged their children to read is “being read to,” and the same proportion (33%) say “seeing their mother or father read.” Other responses were “having access to books with familiar characters” (18%), “seeing an older sibling read (7%), “electronic learning aids” (3%), and “other” (2%).

And finally, asked, “if your child/children 12 or younger could pick one favourite character from a book or TV to come to life and read to them, who would it be?” 11% of parents of children age 12 and younger who have or do read to their children say Harry Potter, 9% say Winnie the Pooh, and 7% say Caillou. Six in ten (57%) of parents gave responses dispersed across numerous characters such as Arthur, Barney, Blues Clues, and Dr. Seuss but each have totals of 3% or less. The remaining 16% say they “don’t know.”

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted on behalf of Fisher-Price between August 26th and 28th, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 233 Canadians with children age 12 and younger who have or do read to their children. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 6.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population of Canadians with children age 12 and younger who have or do read to their children been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age composition reflects that of the actual population according to the 2001 Census data.



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