

“Reading Allowed”: A Note From Ms. Eberhardt

Reading Allowed

At last week’s curriculum night, several parents asked questions about how to get their kids interested in reading. One simple suggestion: read aloud. No student at Clyde Hill is too old for—and every student can benefit from—reading aloud with a parent or adult friend. Regular reading aloud helps literacy. When kids are read to, fluency, comprehension, and all writing improve; vocabulary takes off; and reading is valued and reinforced in a tangible way. We see it every day: the strongest readers and most articulate students, when asked, almost always say their families regularly read aloud.

Some kids will resist it. I can’t tell you how many times over the years a student has proudly declared that he or she reads “independently,” implying they’ve outgrown being read to. Don’t fall for this ruse. Your kids listen on a higher level than they read, so listening to other readers stimulates their understanding of vocabulary and language patterns. This holds true for kindergartners and fifth graders alike. Your son or daughter can intellectually and emotionally handle—and will love—countless books he or she can’t yet tackle alone. By reading aloud, you can help them expand their world and encourage curiosity. (This is why all grade levels at Clyde Hill have a “read aloud” time during class.)

Take *Harry Potter*, for example. How many second and third graders have copies of these books on their desks? How many want to be able to say they’ve read them? How many are actually *ready* to read them? The stories are accessible, but they are 7th grade reading level. Only a handful of students can get the most out of these stories alone (even *after* seeing the movie), but they can still enjoy them to the fullest if an adult takes the time to read them aloud.

Books on tape (or CD) are good, too, but they’re not the same. If you want your children to make reading an essential part of their identity and lives, model and share it.