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Contrary to popular belief, librarians do not sit around the library all day reading books. As much as we would love to grab a stack of new titles and settle in with a cup of our favorite coffee, we just don't have the time to read every new book that comes into the building. Now that doesn't mean we pass up the opportunity to read books that speak directly to the mission of the library. In fact, I've been reading one such book over the past several days.

I started reading *The Read Aloud Handbook* (Trelease, 2013) because of the subtitle (...includes a giant treasury of great read-aloud books) mostly because I thought it would be an easy and effective way to purchase books for the Children's Department. But what I found so fascinating is that the first half of the book talks about the importance of why we should be reading aloud to children. Trelease discusses several reasons why reading aloud is crucial but I think he best sums it up within the first few pages of Chapter One:

*We read to children for all the same reasons we talk with children: to reassure, to entertain, to bond, to inform or explain, to arouse curiosity, and to inspire. But in reading aloud we also build vocabulary, condition the child's brain to associate reading with pleasure, create background knowledge, provide a reading role model and plant the desire to read.* (Page 6)

Of all of the reasons to read aloud to children I think his last point is the most important. Planting the desire to read at a young age will foster a lifelong love of reading that carries a child through grade school, high school, and college and into the adult world of jobs and careers. *Students who read the most also read the best, achieve the most and stay in school the longest.* (Page 7)

The Beloit Public Library strives to foster a love of reading in children through the many early literacy programs and collections we offer including Baby Play Dates, Preschool Storytimes, the *1000 Books Before Kindergarten* reading program, Family Literacy Kits and so much more. Find the time to stop in to pick up a stack of books and start reading to your child. You won't regret it and neither will your child.

Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and visit [www.beloitlibrary.org](http://www.beloitlibrary.org) for more information on all of the library's programs. And check out these books available at your Beloit Public Library:

*Effective Read-Alouds for Early Literacy* by Katherine Beauchat. Sharing high-quality storybooks and nonfiction books not only is enjoyable for young children and teachers—it is also a powerful way to build crucial literacy skills. This engaging guide provides effective strategies for selecting books and using read-alouds to develop children's oral language, vocabulary, concepts of print, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and comprehension. (Book Description)

*Raising Confident Readers: How to Teach Your Child to Read and Write, From Baby to Age Seven* by Richard Gentry. When it comes to language, the most critical brain growth happens in early childhood. *Raising Confident Readers* shows you how to activate and accelerate this capacity for learning. Whether your child is a baby or toddler, in preschool or kindergarten... Dr. Gentry helps you... take the next steps to build writing, reading, and spelling skills. (Book Description)