

# NEWSPAPERS + READING = KNOWLEDGE

## AT ANY AGE!

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**M**y old friend, the newspaper, lands on my driveway every morning. It's dependable, it's current and it's always waiting for me.

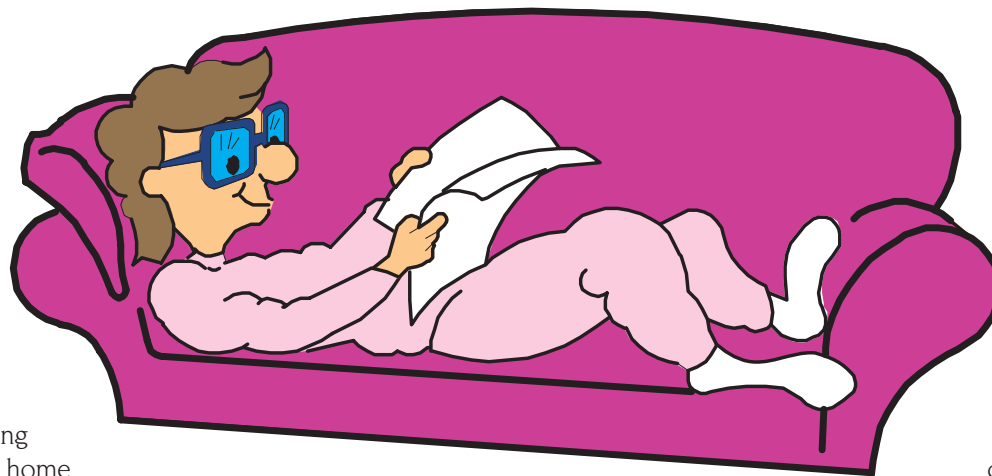
Some people read newspapers first thing every morning. Others wait until they're home and ready to unwind. They rush through it; they linger over it. I dash through mine during the week, longing for my weekend ritual: a slow, lazy Sunday morning with my thick newspaper in my lap, a cup of tea by my side and my favorite morning show on the television.

No matter how we approach reading the newspaper, we all do it for one reason – to gain knowledge.

Knowledge gained from reading the newspaper comes in many forms. We might hope to learn something new, obtain the latest information or seek guidance about a problem or product. Maybe we read the paper to discover the previous night's sports scores or lottery numbers. It might mean finding out about last night's storm, a fire in the mountains or the death of a friend. Whatever the reason, a very important fact remains – reading is at the heart of this knowledge-gaining process.

But where and when do we start? Is the newspaper only for adults? When do children start reading the newspaper? For me, the comics (or the funnies, as my family called them) were my first introduction. The newspaper, along with books and magazines, was a constant in my home.

I distinctly remember the time my mother handed our local newspaper to me – I was



in elementary school, pushing toward junior high – and I recall her words quite clearly. "You might want to read this. It is all about your community and people you know." We lived in a small town, to be sure, but from that point on, reading the newspaper became a habit.

It can become a habit in your family, too. And more than that, the newspaper can be a useful tool for helping children learn to read.

Research guides how educators teach children to read. They learn strategies to implement in the classroom and share with parents. Reading the newspaper, however, doesn't have to be grounded in scientific research. It can be fun, educational and meaningful. The rest of this article describes some strategies (based on current research) that parents can use with children of all ages to support their learning and reading development by using the newspaper.

### Talking and listening

Young children learn language by listening to others talk or read aloud. Conversations are important. If you have infants or toddlers in your

household, it is important that they hear and participate in conversations. They

might not talk, but they sure can listen and make sounds. This process helps them learn that words have a purpose.

What should you talk about? Anything and everything. Why not talk about what you are reading in the newspaper? Share an article with an older child or your spouse, and let your toddler listen. Point to where the article is located in the newspaper so that everyone knows what you are talking about. Start a discussion with the family at the dinner table about a topic in the newspaper that caught your eye. Read the comics out loud while the family is sprawled on the living room floor.

Sharing, talking and listening are important basics upon which language, reading and knowledge are built. Just by talking and sharing, everyone benefits. The newspaper is a perfect place to start this family habit.

### Letters, words and print concepts

Letters make up words. Words make up sentences. Sentences make up paragraphs. Paragraphs make up newspaper articles, magazines, books and more. Depending upon the