



books

Reading 'act of love'

for children

THE READING BUG AND HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD CATCH IT
By Paul Jennings
(Penguin, \$29.95)

PAUL Jennings says that one of the most valuable things a parent can do for their children is to help teach them to read. He says parents' involvement is the one single factor that indicates how well a child will do with reading.

Drawing on his experience as a parent of six, teacher, speech pathologist and master storyteller whose books have sold more than eight million copies, Jennings says that when parents involve themselves in their child's reading, the benefits are enormous.

"It says you are the centre of my world and when you look down at the sparkling eyes you know beyond a shadow of doubt that you are the centre of theirs.

"Reading stories to children is an act of love that helps turn children into imaginative, caring adults."

In this chatty, humorous, jargon-free and easy-to-read book, Jennings recommends that parents "really ham it up" as they read to their children.

"The shyest person can become Billy Connolly in the privacy of a child's bedroom. Put on voices, roll your eyes, whisper in fear. Whoop and jump around. You are a dragon, a princess, a king."

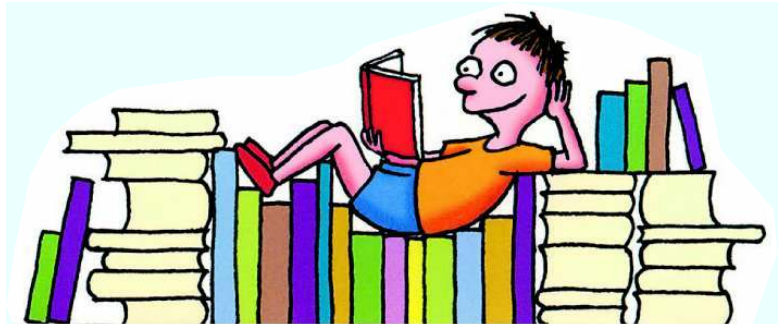
And while Jennings says that the first aim is to have fun and the second is to get meaning, he says that parents should try to make the whole experience as easy as possible.

"Pick the right book, explain any hard words, set them up for success, not failure. If a book is too hard, don't persist, find another book."

Jennings covers a range of issues, such as the importance of choosing the right book for your child, the use of picture clues, phonics, how to respond when your child strikes a difficult word, the value of rhyming stories and learning stories off by heart. There are recommended book lists for all ages and stages.

Jennings has included an insightful chapter on reluctant readers, a chapter devoted to boys' reading issues, and a strong message about the importance of "creating the whole language home, where there are books, magazines, papers, calendars, cards, pictures and stories everywhere, where children learn that reading is done for our own benefit and not someone else's".

— SALLYANN GEALE.



‘ A parent can learn to teach reading without having to memorise jargon. There is just a kid, lying on a bed, with a book refusing to put the light out. ’