

Islamic Strategies for Family Building

April, 2020

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Presentation Agenda

- Goal of Tarbiyah
- Looking at Ourselves
- Principled Behaviour
- Stages of Growth
- Islamic Education and Upbringing
- Entertainment Media
- Media Alternatives
- Safety
- Common Issues
- Tips for Isolation



Goal of Tarbiyah

System of Tarbiyah: An Islamic Perspective

- * Every human being is born with a Fitrah (God-knowing and God-seeking nature)
 - * So set your heart on the deen unswervingly! Take hold of the fitrah of Allah according to which He created all human beings! There is no altering Allah's creation. (Surah al-Room 30:30)

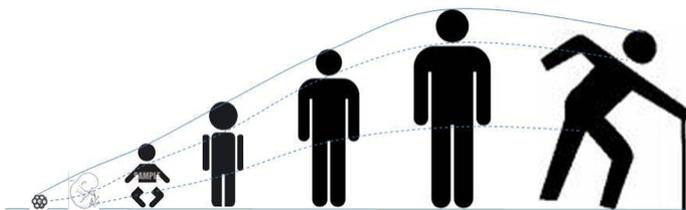




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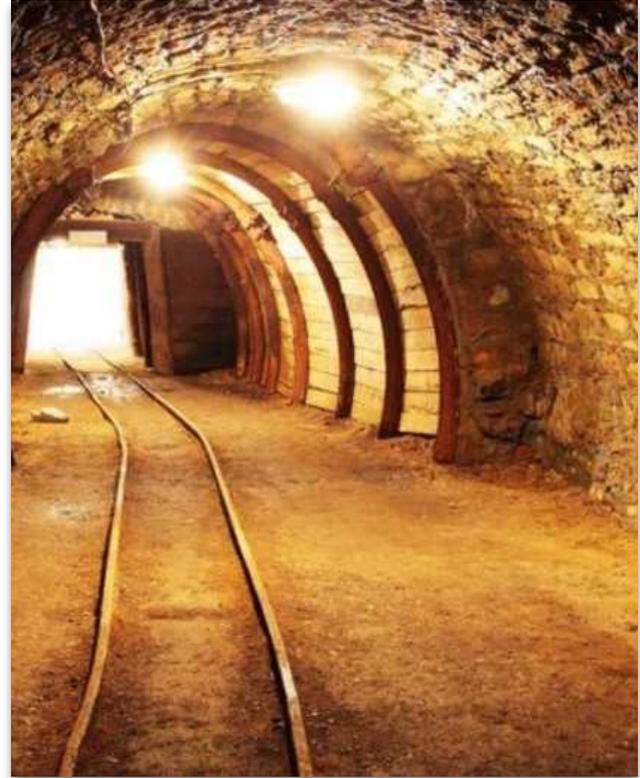


Abbasi, M. *Man-e digar-e ma*, v. 1, p. 68

- * Every human being is born with a Fitrah (God-knowing and God-seeking nature)
- * The role of parents is to guide them to this nature
- * The goal is infinite

People are mines, like mines of gold and silver.” –
Imam as-Sadiq, Al-Kafi

- * Everyone has potential within that needs to be discovered
- * People have different strengths and capabilities
- * What is inside is much more beautiful than what is on the outside
- * You have to know something about gold and silver in order to discover it
- * Techniques for discovering it are important





System of Tarbiyah: An Islamic Perspective

- ① Everything has a goal for which it is destined. Tarbiyah is the process of helping it realize its goal.
- ① Tarbiyah of humans takes place in the womb and continues until one dies
- ① Tarbiyah is about becoming not just learning
- ① The Murabbis of a human being include: The Rabb, Prophets, Imams, parents, scholars, and teachers / mentors



Looking at Ourselves



What comes around, goes around...

- Prophet (s): Be good to your parents! If you are, your children will be good to you. Be chaste when dealing with women! If you are, your women will be chaste.
- Imam as-Sadiq (a): Glad tidings be to one whose mother is *'afifah* (chaste)



Tarbiyah of the Self

- One of the strongest way of doing Tarbiyah of others is to be the example
 - Actions speak louder than words
- Major life events are opportunities for one to reflect and self-build in order to have effective relationships with others
- Raising children is a huge test for parents and part of their Tarbiyah
 - Effects are seen gradually
 - Rewards is based on effort, not results
- When does Tarbiyah begin? Some have said 20 years before a child's birth.



What is the Goal?

1. Testing to See Who Does the Best of Actions and Conduct

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا^ط

It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His Throne was [then] upon the waters—that He may test you [to see] which of you is best in conduct. [Hud 7]

2. Worship of God

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should worship Me.
[Adh Dhariyat 56]



What is the Goal?

3. Receiving the Special Mercy of God

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

except those on whom your Lord has mercy—and that is why He created them—and the word of your Lord has been fulfilled: ‘I will surely fill hell with jinn and humans, all together!’ [Hud 119]

4. Eternal Divine Pleasure and Bliss

قُلْ أَوْنَبِيَّكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَلِكَ لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

Say, ‘Shall I inform you of something better than that? For those who are Godway there will be gardens near their Lord, with streams running in them, to remain in them [forever], and chaste mates, and Allah’s pleasure.’ And Allah sees best the servants. [Al 'Imran 15]

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

Allah has promised the faithful, men and women, gardens with streams running in them, to remain in them [forever], and good dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. Yet Allah’s pleasure is greater [than all these]; that is the great success. [At Tawbah 72]



Fulfilling Responsibilities Leads to Spiritual Growth

- ⦿ Eating pure and healthy food
- ⦿ Adequate sleep
- ⦿ Exercise
- ⦿ Halal entertainment
- ⦿ Doing proper taqlīd
- ⦿ Trying to get married (when conditions are fulfilled)
- ⦿ Taking care of one's spouse
- ⦿ Silat al-Rahim
- ⦿ Halal source of income
- ⦿ Fulfilling Islamic financial obligations
- ⦿ Islamic siblinghood
- ⦿ Social / political responsibilities
- ⦿ Setting aside time for `ibadah



Suggestions for Turning towards the Path of Servitude

- Gradual approach
- Leaving aside Haram and performing Wajibat is the basis
- Leaving aside spiritually polluting media (shows, movies, games)
- Schedule one's time
- Learning about one's responsibilities and committing to a regular program of *Mustahabbat*
- Receive regular spiritual reminders
- Entreating / begging of Allah
- Tawassul to the Ahlul Bayt
- Muraqabah (self-awareness/mindfulness) and Muhasabah (self-accounting)
- Refining of traits, including purity of intention (Ikhlas), self-confidence and 'Izzah, Hilm (forbearance)



Importance of Muraqabah and Muhasabah

Being able to do effective Tarbiyah or receive Tarbiyah depends on making use of the intellect - whether someone is having a material, psychological, or spiritual impact on others, or whether someone is being impacted by others in any of these ways...Therefore, parents should always be reflecting on which solution to present to their children so that they present the best solution given the situation. This is because education and raising children requires a specific solution for every stage of development. **Some amount of these solutions comes through reflection and taking lesson from the past, by thinking about how beneficial, or harmful, their past behavior has been. They should then make use of what was beneficial and cast aside what was harmful.** This principle is a precise solution that fits into the framework of Muraqabah and Muhasabah.

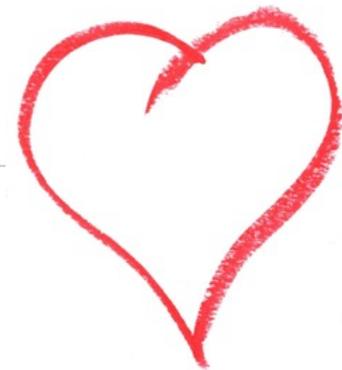
- Paraphrased and translated from Commentary on Risaleye Huqooq, Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir Tahriri



Principled Behaviour



Principle #1 of Islamic Parenting



- Demonstrating Love
 - Love your children and be kind to them
 - Rasullah (s)



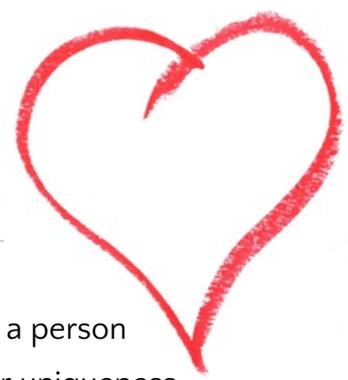
Ways of Showing Love – Younger Children



- Smiling
- Speaking well
- Physical affection
- Humility
- Truthfulness
- Akhlaaq
- Gifts
- Freedom
- Play with *consistency, contact and interaction*
- Complementing
- Telling stories (including fun stories)
- Planning ahead
- Taking responsibility of Tarbiyah seriously

Notes:

- Media / technology cannot replace love and attention that children need from parents. In many cases, trying to replace it will backfire
- Consider reducing social obligations to allow family time



Ways of Showing Love – Older Children

- Smiling
- Speaking well
- Listening well
- Physical affection
- Humility
- Truthfulness
- Akhlaaq
- Gifts
- Spending time with them
- Playing sports and games
- Complementing
- Using terms of endearment
- Giving attention

- Showing genuine interest in them as a person
- Understanding and appreciating their uniqueness
- Knowing their likes / dislikes
- Respectful humor and joking
- Surprise and spontaneity
- Exchanging stories
- Taking responsibility of Tarbiyah seriously

Notes:

- Others (friends / media / technology) cannot replace love and attention that children need from parents. In many cases, trying to replace it will backfire
- Consider reducing social obligations to allow family time



Principle #2 of Islamic Parenting

Always Show Respect

- “May Allah have mercy on the parent who helps his child in doing good...he accepts the little that he does, he passes over the difficult things, he does not tire him out by ordering him, and does not disrespect him.”
– Rasulullah (s)



Examples of Respect – Younger Children

- Body language
- Tone of Voice
- Keeping promises
- Greeting them



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Respect needed even when pointing out mistakes or disciplining – Younger Children

- ⦿ Don't rebuke them for their past mistakes
- ⦿ Don't destroy their self-dignity
- ⦿ When disciplining, be firm, assertive, consistent but still gentle
- ⦿ Have high but reasonable expectations in line with their nature and capabilities





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Examples of Respect – Older Children

- Pre-teens and teenagers have a great need to be shown respect and not treated like a child
- Body language
- Tone of voice
- Requests vs. commands
- Keeping promises
- Greeting them



Respect needed even when pointing out mistakes or disciplining – Older Children

- Respect needed even when pointing out mistakes or disciplining
- Don't rebuke them for their past mistakes
- Don't destroy their self-dignity
- Give them time to reform
 - Can sometimes take a very long time!
- With an environment of respect, rules will not be seen as overly strict or forceful
- When disciplining, be firm, assertive, consistent but still gentle
- Have high but reasonable expectations in line with their nature and capabilities



Parents as an Example for Children

Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said to Mas'adah, *"The best thing parents can hand down to their children is Adab, not wealth. Wealth goes away while Adab remains."*

- * Personal Values
- * Social values
- * Relationship between Husband and Wife
- * Ibadah
- * Avoiding non-Islamic culture and values





Parents as a United Team

- Parents should discuss disagreements in private and have a united front
- Parent should stand for each other in asking children to have proper respect and etiquette (without being unjust)





Freedom vs. Control



7:7:7 Hadith

- Famous version of hadith narrated from Rasulullah (peace be upon him and his family): A [male] child is a master for seven years, a slave for seven years, and a vizier (*) for seven years...
 - (*): one who carries a *wizr* or a heavy load for someone else
- Other versions of the hadith say:
 - Stage 1: Let him play for seven years, let him be free for six years, a child plays for seven years...
 - Stage 2: Educate him and teach him the book, train him in the rules of life (*Adab*), discipline him
 - Stage 3: Let him be with you, let him serve you, let him learn Halal and Haram



7:7:7 Hadith - Takeaway

- ⑦ 7, 14, and 21 years is an indication of a natural developmental stage – can occur earlier or later
- ⑦ Ahadith are about boys – as girls tend to mature earlier, stages wouldn't necessarily be the same
- ⑦ Freedom in first stage relates to playing freely, not expecting them to be obedient, not forcing them to learn
- ⑦ Second stage is for expecting conformance to rules and learning
- ⑦ Third stage is for learning (details of) Halal and Haram, accepting responsibility
- ⑦ These are all guidelines that need to be applied in a rational manner – they have exceptions



Stages of Development

- ◎ First stage: Up to 6-7 years old
 - Children learn from what they see in role models
 - Try to avoid directly ordering them unless the matter is dangerous or inappropriate (given the age)
 - If need to scold, scold with compassion, and don't be strict
 - Try to entertain their wishes (within reasonable bounds)



Stages of Development

- ◎ Second stage: Approximately 7 – 14 years old
 - Children are deeply in need of compassion
 - Provide clear rules and regulations
 - Doesn't have to / shouldn't always be in the form of direct orders and prohibitions
 - Allow learning through experience and through understanding on their own
 - Set expectations of obedience and compliance



Stages of Development

- ◎ Third stage: Approximately 14 – 21 years old
 - Youth seek independence and respect from others
 - Have need for strong emotional bonds
 - Give logic behind what you request
 - Take them as counselors and companions . Give serious responsibilities to allow their abilities to flourish. Don't be nit-picky and nagging about their faults and mistakes.



Some areas to set limits and expectations

- Wajib and Haraam
- Salat
- Friends
- Media exposure
- Access to Devices
- Amount of time spent on video games
- Diet
 - A lot of behaviour problems can be due to improper diet
- Junk food consumption
 - Teenagers resist healthy food
- Boys crave protein and fat
- Girls may want to eat less to be thin
- Teens need more iron, protein, healthy fats
- See Dr. Sears, Dr. Hyman, Dr. Jay Gordon
- Having a bedtime
- Breakfast
- Priorities (first things first!)
- Other areas: Think carefully over where to take a stand, where to be flexible, and where to give independence



If my child is a “good kid”, do they still need rules and regulations?

- Yes, children (especially in the second stage and after) need to realize they are part of a system and that there are certain expectations and responsibilities
- Otherwise, when they get older, they could easily rebel
 - Teaching teenager how to obey rules is much harder than teaching a 7 year old!



Family Model for setting Rules and Regulations

- ◎ Father is presented as the major decision maker and leader of the family
- ◎ All members of the family need to play their own parts
- ◎ There should be rules and regulations
 - Rules should be presented and enforced at different levels depending on age of child

Remember...





Islamic Education and Upbringing



When should I start teaching my children about Islam?

- ⦿ Prior to birth: Observe Islamic etiquette for conception and pregnancy
- ⦿ At birth: Recommended etiquette for birth
- ⦿ First stage of development: Children learn primarily through *living* Islam (feeling loved and respected) and *seeing* Islam be practiced in role models
- ⦿ Best role models: Prophets and Ahlul Bayt (may Allah's blessings be upon them all), companions, righteous scholars, martyrs, parents, etc.

● When should I start teaching my children about Islam?

- ◎ Second stage of development: Formal instruction of Islamic teachings
 - A child may show aptitude and desire to learn before then – play-based learning before this time is ok, without going to the extremes and forcing
- ◎ Prior to *buloogh*, basic level of teachings is necessary
 - It is Mustahab for the guardian of children to teach them the Islamic rules and acts of worship after they reach the age of discernment. (al-Urwah al-Wuthqah, *Salah al-Qadaa*, ruling 36)
- ◎ In pre-teen years, children's spiritual needs will naturally increase
- ◎ Pre-teens / teens will increasingly need to know the *why*



Teaching about Salah – Indirect and Gradual Approach

In a tradition narrated from Imam al-Baqir (a), regarding teaching a boy how to pray,

When your child reaches the age of three, tell him to say seven times, *Laa ilaaha illallah*.

When he reaches the age of three years, seven months, and twenty days, tell him to say seven times, *Muhammadun Rasulullah*.

When he reaches the age of four, tell him to say seven times, *Sallallahu alaa Muhammadin wa Aalih*.

When he reaches the age of five, ask him to distinguish between his left and right hands, and if he is able to do so, face him towards Qiblah, ask him to perform sajdah.

When he reaches the age of six, he should be taught the Ruku' and Sujood.

When he reaches the age of seven, he should be told to wash his face and his hands, and then told to pray.

The Imam then continues to explain that when he reaches the age of nine, he should be taught the Wudhu and Salah and that these should be instituted and regulated for the child.



Teaching Salah for Younger Children

- Ensure that the sights, sounds, and messages they receive about Salah when they are in the first stage of development are positive
 - Example: Adhan being recited out loud
 - Example: What if child wants to feed at Salah time?
 - Example: What if child wants to play at Salah time?
 - Example: Playing with Turbahs

● Waking children for Fajr Salah

- Use gentle language and tone
- Remind children of the purpose: *Wake up my dear, Allah is waiting for you / It's time for Salah. Let's thank Allah for everything he's given us.*
- Natural to take several attempts
- Is *wajib* to wake them up for Salah when prayers are being taken lightly
 - If it causes them to get upset, should they still be woken up?

● Teaching about Sawm (Fasting) – Indirect and Gradual Approach

Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: “And at the age of 7, we ask our children to fast to their capability, either half of the day or more or less, and we order them to break their fast when they become hungry or thirsty. This is so that they become used to fasting. Thus you should ask your [male] children to fast at the age of 9, and tell them to break their fast when they are thirsty or hungry.”
(Usul al-Kafi)



Importance of this Teaching

Hadith of Rasulullah (*sallallahu alayhi wa aalih*) said, “Woe be to the children at the end of times on account of their fathers!” He was asked, “Will their parents be polytheists?” He said, “No, it’s because their believing fathers won’t teach their children about their responsibilities, and when they try to learn about their religion, their parents prevent them from doing so, and they are happy with whatever they earn from the dunya on account of their children. I have nothing to do with them, and they have nothing to do with me.”



Importance of this Teaching

Every Muslim – rather, every human being, should know that his sons and daughters are Divine trusts that have been entrusted with him. He will be asked about them and taken to account for them. Yes, it is necessary for him to protect their bodies and nourish their growth by spending on them when it comes to their food, drink, and clothing. But it is similarly obligatory – or rather, more obligatory – to raise their intellects, to nourish their souls, to correct their beliefs, and to satiate their senses with the roots of religion and its primary branches. It is also obligatory to train them to have excellent *akhlaaq* such as truthfulness, chastity, and trustworthiness, and to train them to have cleanliness, purity, and prayer...It is with such principals and fundamentals that a human being can become a human being. Without them, he is nothing but a donkey or a devil..." (Shaykh Kashif al-Ghita, *Sual wa Jawab*, p. 157)



Entertainment

Nutrition of the Soul

- * Major pollutants of the soul:
 - * Devices
 - * YouTube, Netflix, TV
 - * Peers / friends / company
 - * Environment





Themes





Themes – Media for Younger Children





Themes – Media for Younger Children

MY TUMMY HURTS



Themes – Media for Younger Children





Themes – Media for Older Children



Themes – Media for Older Children





Themes – Media for Older Children





Themes – Media for Older Children





Trends in Movies and Shows

- ⦿ Sexualization of society
- ⦿ Enslaving viewers to base desires
- ⦿ Breaking all barriers
- ⦿ Using different influencers





Controlling media

- Control media exposure to what's necessary – don't let it control you
- Installing protective software
- Children should use media (including TVs) in a common room at home where screens are visible to all
- Personal devices → can't place rules on them
 - Have family devices, like the family laptop
- Have clear guidelines on *when* devices can be used and *how* they can be used



Controlling media

- ◎ Be careful about the company you keep
- ◎ Delay creating accounts as much as possible
- ◎ Make it clear that all accounts will be monitored
- ◎ Become savvy about technology
- ◎ Don't be naïve
 - Ways parents have been deceived: When multiple user accounts are created, knowing the root passwords, using email as a form of social media, illegal access to Netflix clones, smuggling devices, apps that have parent mode features, using devices in Islamic centres and social gatherings, using apps to connect with others inappropriately in Islamic centres
- ◎ Understand the red line between halal and haraam
 - If need be, watch some programs with your children and discuss afterwards



Potential Harms of Video Games

- Promotion of Shahwah
- Desensitization towards violence
- Promotion of materialism, individualism, laziness, sarcasm, foul language, aggressiveness
- Hardening of the heart
- False understanding of who is successful
- Depression and anxiousness
- when not playing the game (especially for a prolonged period)
- Obsessive thinking about next gaming session when not online
- Lowered interest in school achievement
- Inappropriate relationships
- Child predators



Explaining to Children about Video Game Addiction

- ⦿ Explain we have been placed on the earth for a purpose - to serve Allah - not to just engage in *lahw* and *la'ib* (diversion and play)
 - Use moral stories to illustrate this
 - We will be asked about how we spent our time
- ⦿ Excessive play can affect physical health and academic performance
- ⦿ Boost self-esteem through love and respect
- ⦿ Find real ways to satisfy curiosity, belonging, and reward
- ⦿ Be aware of what games children play and whom they communicate with
- ⦿ Set limits and restrictions
- ⦿ Provide healthy alternatives
 - "Reset" with time in nature
- ⦿ If they deny they are addicted, ask them to prove it by disconnecting



Fatwa about media that affects ethics and values

Question: What types of programs and TV shows are prohibited for parents to allow their children to watch?

Answer: Anything that is contradictory to their righteous, religious upbringing, such as shows that contain elements of inviting to evil, and prohibiting good, spreading destructive thoughts, indecent and satanic lust-provoking images, and anything that causes a deterioration in the thought and character of the viewer.

(translated from Arabic, sistani.org)



Fatwa about monitoring children's devices

Question: Is it permissible for the father to be watchful over his son or daughter by means of searching through his site or his phone to see whom he communicates with a means of protecting him / her?

Answer: It is permissible to the extent that is necessary to protect him / her from Haram.

(translated from Arabic, sistani.org)



Media Alternatives



Alternatives





Quran

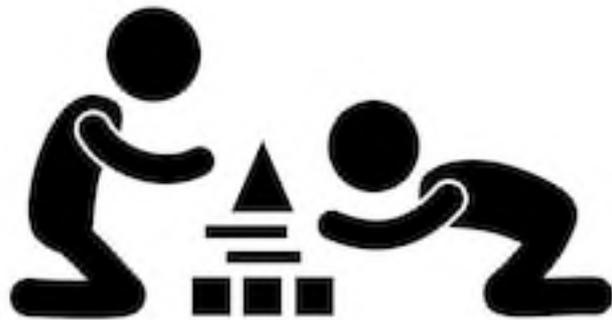














Non-media options

- ⦿ Playtime
- ⦿ Reading
- ⦿ Outdoor activities
- ⦿ Sports
- ⦿ Healthy crafts and hobbies
- ⦿ Friends who have same values



Promote Culture of Positive Reading

- ① “Reading is a competitor to [negative] media. However much a family becomes more tuned to media, they will distance themselves from the culture of reading. The more they read, the less media they will use.” [Ustad Abbasi]
- ① Medium of a book is more prone to appeal to the intellect than visual media



Decline in Reading



NLT report reveals decline in children reading for pleasure

Published March 5, 2019 by **Charlotte Eyre**

Share    

The number of children and young people who read every day and the percentage of those who read for pleasure have declined, according to research carried out by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) for World Book Day (WBD).

According to data released today (5th March), based on provisional data from the NLT's ninth Annual Literacy Survey of 27,945 children and young people, just over a quarter (25.7%) of those aged 8-18 read every day, compared to 43% in 2015.

The percentage of children and young people who say they read for pleasure has also declined, falling to 52.5%. In 2016, that figure stood at 58.8%.



Promote Culture of Positive Reading

- “The more we move ahead, the more we will need books. It is wrong to think that books will be sidelined after the emergence of new communication equipment...”
- “It is necessary to promote book reading in society...I believe one of the worst and most harmful kinds of laziness is the lack of energy to read books...”
- “Certain people are used to reading books, but books that do not require thinking. Nothing is wrong with this. After all, this is a kind of reading. I would not deny this. But it is better to combine recreational reading – like reading novels, autobiographies and easy historical books – with reading serious books, books that require thinking and careful studying.”



Choosing Worthwhile Reading Material

- ⦿ Regularly invest in reading material
- ⦿ Must be chosen carefully
- ⦿ Books are easier to filter
 - Don't let down guard in the library
- ⦿ Purposefully and tastefully choose classics and books written in the past



Reading Time

- ⦿ Have times for the entire family to read and/or listen to audio books
- ⦿ Reading to children at bedtime



Resources





Safety

Keeping Children Safe

- * Educate about keeping safe
- * Education about important topics according to the appropriate age of intellectual maturity as necessary
- * Being extremely watchful and aware
- * Keep children occupied





?



**Important
Issues**



Open Issues related to this Topic

- ⦿ How should we deal with grandparents and extended family who have different ideas about how to raise children?
- ⦿ How do we do *Silat ar-Rahim* with family members who have different values and strategies for raising children?
- ⦿ Can we leave our children unattended at community centres?
- ⦿ How do I choose a school for my child?
- ⦿ What makes an Islamic school, “Islamic”?
- ⦿ What is an Islamic perspective on screen media, video games, and social media?



Tips for Isolation

- ① Show extra love, care, patience, and forgiveness – these are cherished moments
 - Children will express their fear and frustration in non-verbal ways
- ② Routine that addresses spiritual, psychological, physical, and social needs
- ③ Have screen-off times during the day
- ④ Try something new (like audiobooks, Islamic historical films)
- ⑤ Use it as an opportunity to become a better parent