

What do kids love most? Their parents reading to them

Study finds that children are hungry for bedtime stories

By Nick Vinocur, Reuters

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Almost two-thirds of children want their parents to spend more time reading to them before bed, and most prefer Mom's storytelling to Dad's, researchers said on Friday.

They conducted a study that showed younger children aged three to four were most hungry for more stories, with more than three-quarters saying they wished their parents read to them more often.

More than half of all children aged three to eight said story time was their favourite pastime with their parents.

"The results of our research confirm the traditional activity of storytelling continues to be a powerful learning and emotional resource in children's lives," said child psychologist Richard Woolfson, who led the study commissioned by Disney/Pixar World of Cars.

Storytelling ranked higher than television or video games among pastimes for kids, and 82 per cent said reading a story with their parents helped them sleep better, according to the survey of 500 children aged three to eight in Britain.

The best storytellers were mothers who used funny voices to illustrate different characters or made their own special sound effects to keep the story moving, researchers said.

When Mom and Dad are not at hand, celebrities will do: over 30 per cent of children said they would like to hear a bedtime story from Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe, with teen idols Zac Efron, Miley Cyrus and Emma Watson trailing close behind.

"It can be very difficult for parents to find the time to read with their children, but these moments can help build strong bonds and play a vital part in their child's development," said Woolfson.

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