



## Parents, Have Your Children Caught You Reading?

By Educator Barnes – May 5, 2019

As a current librarian and a former English teacher and literacy coach, my heart's desire is for all children to loving reading and for all children to have the internal motivation to read. Over my career, parents have told me I was the reason their child started reading. I have heard, "My child never finished a novel until you were his English teacher." That's a lot of pressure on a teacher. Although I succeeded with many students, there were some students who would not read during our silent sustained reading (SSR) time unless I was standing next to their desks. Honestly, it is hard, but not impossible, to win over a middle or even a high school student and



turn him or her into a reader. This burden should not solely fall to teachers. Teachers and parents should be partners in educating students.

Yes, I was an English teacher for nine years, but that isn't why students knew I was a reader. They knew I was a reader because they caught me reading during our SSR time. Also, when I was an English teacher, I posted the books I read throughout the school year outside of my classroom door. Posting those book covers were definitely a conversation starter and made some students curious enough to pick up the books I read or books in the same genre. The real question is, "Parents, have your children caught you reading?"

May is National Get Caught Reading Month. According to the Get Caught Reading website:

*Get Caught Reading is a nationwide campaign to promote the fun of reading books for all ages. Launched in 1999 by the Association of American Publishers and now managed by Every Child a Reader with support from the Lois Lenski Covey Foundation, Get Caught Reading provides teachers and librarians with small posters of TV and sports stars, authors, and beloved book characters reading a book. Recent posters feature wonderful role models from recent USA Olympic teams.*

Seeing a teacher or a celebrity with a book might motivate some students to read, but the most important person they should see reading is their parents.

My boys frequently catch my husband and I reading. My husband enjoys reading comic books, and I enjoy reading novels and magazines. It is great to tell your children to read, and your children's school might even try to motivate them through the use of reading logs, but I have found these to be less effective ways to motivate children to read. I believe seeing an adult a child cares for deeply reading books is one of the best motivators for children picking up books and gaining a love of reading for themselves.

Even if reading isn't part of your normal routine, sit down and read where your children can see you. Think about a time where you can do this a few times a week, and then reading can become your habit. The best part is that your habit could become your children's habit, and reading is a great habit for your children to pick up from you.