

Here's what I think ...

By Ty Ankrom

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The frequent laments that children spend too much time with electronic gadgets may be warranted, but they're also finding time to read for pleasure.

The Scholastic Kids & Family Reading Report: Fifth Edition uncovered some positive statistics about kids and reading. The report came from a survey of kids ages 6 to 17 and parents of children those ages.

Among the key findings, 51 percent of those surveyed said they were reading a book for fun at the time of the survey. One in five said they had just finished reading a book for fun.

I've never considered myself a reader, someone who carries a book around all the time. But I was fortunate as a child that my reading comprehension helped me succeed in school.

Today, that ability is beneficial to me for the professional reading I do, such as periodicals and reports. The Scholastic study found that parents and children agreed that reading is one of the three most important skills to develop, with 71 percent of parents saying so and 54 percent of children.

However, only 46 percent of the children surveyed thought it was important to read for fun. (Eighty-six percent of parents thought that was important.)

Thinking back to my own childhood, I can understand that. I was always more interested in playing baseball or basketball. Reading for "fun" wasn't a concept I grasped at that age.

And, for better or worse, children have more than just baseball and basketball to fill their days now.

The study found that reading competes with five to seven other non-school activities during a week, all of them using an electronic device.

Despite that, the study found that children who are considered moderately frequent readers – reading books for fun 1-4 days a week – has remained steady at about 40 percent in 2010, 2012 and 2014.

Developing a love for reading has many benefits. Scholastic CEO Dick Robinson said that frequent readers – those who read books for fun five or more days a week – can lead to increased reading annually and, in his view, produce better results in school.

Read the full report at www.scholastic.com/readingreport/. Just for fun.

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