



Wake Up Reading the Cereal Box

Everyday reading materials are all around us. The cereal box is a great example. Do you recall enjoying reading the back of the cereal box when you were a kid? Maybe you're a big kid at heart and still do! No matter what age your child is, cereal boxes are a great source of reading material.

Here are several activities that will wake up your child's brain as he or she begins the morning munching cereal.

Grades K-2

- **Early Word Recognition:** "Snap! Crackle! Pop!" may be among the first words your child recognizes. Point out the words individually as your child recites a cereal jingle, a slogan ("They're gr-e-a-t!") or the name of a cereal to help them make the association between spoken and written words. Write the words one-by-one on a piece of paper and ask your child to point to the matching word on the box. This helps your child begin to recognize the same words out of context.
- **Story Starters:** Cut out the characters and pictures that appear on the front and back of your child's favorite cereal box. Staple or glue them onto ice cream sticks so your child can use them as stick puppets to tell a story.

Grades 3-5

- **Alphabetical Ingredients:** Ingredients are listed according to what percentage of the cereal they comprise, from most to least. Your child can write

down the ingredients in a new order--from A to Z.

- **New Product:** Perhaps your child would like to invent a new cereal. What shape will it be? What color and flavor? Suggest designing a wrapper for the new cereal that you can paste over the old cereal box. Your child can draw pictures of the cereal, describe it and include nutritional information, a recipe and a free send-away offer.

Grades 6-12

- **Nutrition Research:** Along one narrow side panel of the cereal box, in fine print, is a nutrition chart and list of ingredients. Here are some of the longest and most obscure words your child may encounter. Go through the list and look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary (try using an online dictionary). You'll be reassured, for example, to learn that folic acid is a natural substance extracted from green leaves. Compare the nutritional information on two boxes of cereal. Is the cereal Dad likes more or less nutritious than the one your child prefers? Which has more sugar? Which has more fiber? More protein?
- **Good Taste in Words:** As your child reads the description of the cereal, ask what words the copywriter used to make the cereal sound good to eat. Go on to suggest that your child replace these words with a word that means the opposite (use an online thesaurus to look up antonyms). The new copy should be pretty amusing. For example Capn' Crunch could be remarketed as Private Soggy.