

# READING FOR PLEASURE

**Our literature review of reading for pleasure suggests at its most simple it is an absorbing and playful activity that we are free to pursue for its own sake (Nell, 1988; Cremin et al., 2014).** It is motivating, enjoyable, educative and good for your wellbeing (Mak & Fancourt, 2020; OECD, 2010; Sullivan & Brown, 2013; Wilhelm & Smith, 2016). But the different and competing reasons why and how we read means that reading is becoming less about pleasure for New Zealand children and young people (Fletcher & Nicholas, 2016).

**Schools and communities that want to support reading for pleasure need to manage competing priorities.** Reading activities in early childhood centres, schools or even at home can have goals for reading that are not related to enjoyment. These might include the development of literacy skills, acquiring information, increasing self-belief, or improving educational performance. More time spent in self-directed, enjoyable, and absorbing reading can help achieve these goals, but these other priorities can dominate children's reading even during time set aside for reading for pleasure.

**Reading for pleasure is not just something you do on your own.** Other people, like parents, friends, whānau and teachers, can encourage reading for pleasure through sharing stories or being seen to enjoy reading (Strommen & Mates, 2004).

*"...the children enjoyed reading in pairs. According to them, reading in pairs is fun and it is enjoyable to laugh together when the events in a story are funny" (Aerila & Merisuo-Storm, 2017).*

**Reading for pleasure gives internal satisfaction, whereas some of the other reasons for reading are externally motivated.** For example, reading can be motivated by family, whānau, school, and society's expectations of achievement, attaining qualifications, future employment and use of time. In Aotearoa New Zealand young people see reading as a useful life skill (Fletcher and Nicholas, 2016) and report spending less time reading for pleasure, especially reading print materials (Medina & McGregor, 2019).

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*Please visit [our website](#) for more information and the full list of references.*

## Schools and communities support reading for pleasure when:

- Readers engage with others to find pleasure in reading, sharing interests and stories.
- Readers have access to different kinds of reading texts including digital, digitally augmented and immersive.
- Readers feel they have autonomy and can choose texts for themselves.
- Where their language and identity are represented in the texts (e.g. Māori and Pacific peoples) (Makereti, 2017).
- Reading is different from how time and space is usually structured at school (Cummings et al. 2018).
- Readers share their reading with others (Aerila & Merisuo-Storm, 2017).
- Leadership promotes reading for pleasure (Merga & Mason, 2019).
- Everyone feels confident and capable (Smith et al. 2012).