

Tip sheet on
Making your story child-friendly
Kids Allowed!

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Many retailers are not excited about children coming into their stores. They are concerned that kids will touch and possibly break merchandise. Children can also be noisy and disruptive, making the shopping experience unpleasant for other shoppers. But if children are brought to a place where they feel welcomed and wanted, you can be sure their parents will bring them back!

Bookstores that welcome children with kid-friendly areas and activities will become a favorite place for Mom and Dad to bring the kids. And getting families into the store will often result in sales.

Here are a few tips to make kids feel welcomed:

- Have a “Kids’ Corner” with kid-sized benches and chairs. Decorate the area with bright colors and pictures of animals or trees. Have a box of books for kids to look at as well as some simple educational toys. This type of setting is not only inviting, but also encourages families to spend time in your store.
- Offer weekly or monthly story hour programs. You can feature a special guest from your community, like a teacher, librarian, or author, or use a staff person to read to the children. The story hour can be used to introduce a new book you want to promote, or share an old favorite. Provide a suggestion box for kids to request a book they want read during story hour. This will encourage them to return.
- Kids love prizes! Give away “free” items such as bookmarks or coloring pages. Be sure to include the name of your store on the items.
- Have fun themes for the story hour. Invite the kids to bring their favorite stuffed animal, or wear their favorite color. You can even have a pajama day!
- Collect email addresses from the families who come for story hour. Sending email reminders is a great way to stay connected to your customers.

If your store is a place where kids want to come, their parents will be happy to bring them!



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