



Living Well
North Tyneside
Supporting Health and Wellbeing

While **14th February** is often associated with Valentine's Day, it is also **International Book Giving Day**—a global initiative that encourages people to share the gift of reading with children and others.

In a world where screens dominate, the simple act of giving a book can open doors to imagination, learning, and lifelong curiosity.

Why Celebrate International Book Giving Day?

- **Increase children's access to books** – Not every child has books at home, and this day helps ensure more children experience the joy of reading.
- **Encourage enthusiasm for books** – A well-chosen story can inspire a lifelong love of reading.
- **Support brain development and academic success** – Reading is more than just a pastime; it has a profound impact on cognitive skills.

The Science Behind Reading and Brain Development

Research shows that reading has a transformative effect on brain development, particularly in children.

How Reading Shapes the Brain

Boosts vocabulary and language skills – Children exposed to books from an early age develop larger vocabularies and stronger language skills, setting them up for better communication and academic success.

Strengthens brain connections – MRI scans reveal that reading increases neural activity in key brain regions responsible for comprehension, critical thinking, and empathy. A 2018 study from Cincinnati Children's Hospital found that children who read frequently had stronger white matter connectivity, improving cognitive function.

Improves focus and memory – Unlike passive screen time, reading demands concentration, helping children develop better attention spans and memory recall.

Enhances emotional intelligence – Reading fiction allows children to step into different perspectives, fostering empathy and social skills. A study published in *Science* (2013) found that people who read literary fiction were better at understanding others' emotions.

How Reading Can Change a Life

One well-known example of the power of reading is Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani activist and youngest Nobel Prize laureate. Malala has spoken about how reading books—especially those about powerful female role models—inspired her to stand up for education rights.

Closer to home, Marcus Rashford, the England footballer, credits reading for helping him develop resilience and determination. His book donation campaign, in partnership with Macmillan Children's Books, has provided thousands of underprivileged children with books.

A single book can change a child's future, helping them imagine possibilities they never thought were within reach.

How to Get Children Interested in Reading (When They Prefer Screens)

In an age where children are drawn to phones, tablets, and video games, how can we make books appealing?

- ✓ **Make reading social** – Join a library, start a family book club, or read together at bedtime.
- ✓ **Connect books to their interests** – If they love superheroes, sports, or gaming, find books that match their passions.

✓ **Use audiobooks** – Listening to stories can be an engaging gateway to reading.

✓ **Create a reading-friendly space** – A cosy reading nook with soft cushions and good lighting can make a difference.

✓ **Lead by example** – When children see parents and caregivers enjoying books, they are more likely to view reading as enjoyable rather than a chore.

How to Celebrate International Book Giving Day

There are many ways to take part in this global movement:

- **Give a book to a child, friend, or family member**– A book chosen with care can make a lasting impression.
- **Donate books to a school, library, hospital, or shelter**– Many organisations welcome book donations.
- **Leave a book for someone to find**– Wrap a book and leave it in a public place as a surprise for a young reader.
- **Start a mini library** – Set up a book exchange at a community centre or school.
- **Share the celebration on social media**– Use #BookGivingDay to inspire others.

The History of International Book Giving Day

This initiative was launched in 2012 by Amy Broadmoore and her son to encourage book donations over traditional Valentine's gifts. It has since grown into an international celebration, with over 40 countries participating.

The impact is simple yet profound—a single book can spark a lifelong love of reading, unlock potential, and transform a child's future.

This 14th February, consider celebrating by sharing a book—because every child deserves the opportunity to experience the magic of reading.

Related Links

- [Give a Book](#)
- [Buy A Book. Support A School.](#)



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