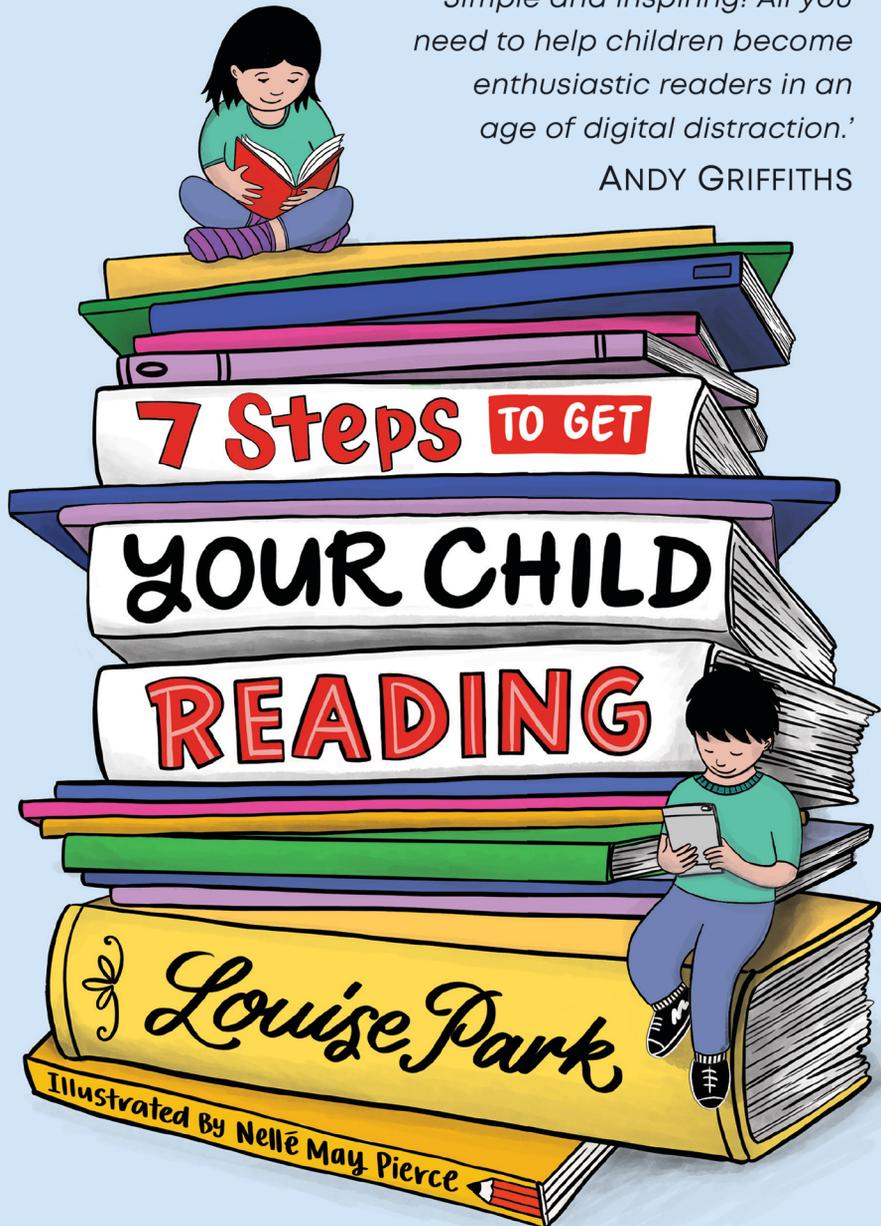


*'Simple and inspiring! All you need to help children become enthusiastic readers in an age of digital distraction.'*

ANDY GRIFFITHS



**PRACTICAL TIPS FOR TIME-POOR PARENTS  
FROM AN AUSTRALIAN LITERACY EXPERT**

**OUT NOW**

# Introduction:

## Generation Alpha

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It is 2011, and Addie is just seventeen months old. She walks up to my television and tries to swipe the screen with her index finger as though it were a gigantic iPad. I watch her, amazed by what this tiny child is doing, but I also find the moment so adorable that I grab my iPhone so that I can video her. I fumble with the settings as I move the camera to video-mode, and in those few seconds she's turned and seen me with the phone, and she wants it. Oh, how she wants it. I set the phone to flight mode and hand it over.

The excitement is beyond anything any other item I have could elicit. Addie's dimpled fingers dexterously pinch, tap and swipe the screen, and the room fills with her babbles and squeals of delight. But for me, the delight is short-lived. The internal cross-examination has begun, and I'm drowning in carer/babysitter guilt. *Why did you give her the stupid iPhone? You're a children's*

## 7 STEPS TO GET YOUR CHILD READING

*author and educator. You know the issues with screen time, you're colluding with the enemy, and you're not even ensuring that it's quality screen time!*

Next, the alarmist news reporting scurries across my brain.

**Technology is destroying our children's brains!**

**It's time to admit that screens are just digital pacifiers!**

**Kids are addicted to screens and parents and carers are to blame!**

I'm to blame. I'm a bad carer. I'm rotting this child's brain by giving in, and she's not even mine! But is it true? Is it really so bad for them?

My internal chatter gets the better of me and the alarmists win, this time. So I try to do the right thing. I attempt distraction techniques so that I can extract the iPhone from her grasp. But the battle was lost the moment I handed it over. Of course, she cries. And cries.

And all the while, another part of me is marvelling at the sheer cleverness of this little girl. Her knowledge of technology at such a young age impresses me. There, I've said it. I am seriously impressed. In fact, it blows my mind. And in all of this, it strikes me how different this child's early years are going to be from my own children's in the late 1980s and early '90s, and how even more starkly different they will be from mine.



Addie is a Generation Alpha child. Anyone born from 2010 up to 2030 will land in the Gen Alpha cohort, and according to statistics, 2.5 million Alphas are born around the globe every week.

If ever a generation had a hallmark first year of births, it's this one. Think about this: 2010 was the first year that Gen Alphas began being born. It was also the year the iPad was introduced, Instagram was created and 'app' was the new buzzword.

These Alpha kids will be the first generation to grow up with iPads and tablets in their hands. The vast majority will never know what life was like without a smartphone. From a young age they will know how to put their thoughts online in an instant and have them broadcast to the masses, and, unlike any generation before them, they will spend their growing years completely immersed in technology.

Gen Alpha, the only generation to live totally in the twenty-first century, is the swiper, pincher and tapper cohort, and the only generation to interact for the first time with these technologies at extremely young ages. Because they are the first generation to do so, they're like a massive global tech experiment. What does it mean for these children to have screens placed in front of them from the get-go as entertainers, educational toys and, at worst, placators? How does it impact on their literacy acquisition? Their learning? Their socialising? Their lives?

But this book isn't so much about technology as it is about how we can ensure our Generation Alpha children become literate in an environment where reading competes with many more interactive claimers of their time. It's about how we harness all that is important for building competent readers and lifelong learners. It's about the steps that will give them the best shot at success, because Gen A are the group most at risk in the literacy stakes – many of them are already struggling.

The goalposts have shifted for them, their parents and caregivers. Gen A are breaking new ground as a result of technological advances, and their parents are having to navigate these uncharted waters.

## 7 STEPS TO GET YOUR CHILD READING

This book will guide you through these uncharted waters. It will help you restore the balance between screens and reading and show you in seven straightforward steps how to ensure your child has a positive and success-oriented journey to literacy. You will discover how to make this journey fun and pain-free, and how to incorporate it effortlessly into family life. Because, let's face it, life is full-on for today's families – there is so much more to juggle, often with less support than previous generations had. If you know how we learn to read, if you know the best techniques to use when reading with your child, if you are fully armed with the best tips and activities, then you simply cannot fail.



'There is more  
treasure in books  
than in all the  
pirate's loot on  
Treasure Island.'

- WALT DISNEY

## Other books by Louise Park

*Grace's Secrets*

D-Bot Squad series (with Susannah McFarlane, as Mac Park)

Harriet Clare series

Boy vs Beast series (with Susannah McFarlane, as Mac Park)

Bella Dancerella series (as Poppy Rose)

Star Girl series

Zac Power Spy Recruit series (as H I Larry)

Zac Power Test Drive series (as H I Larry)

Synthetic Phonics kits, stages 1, 2 & 3

*Ancient & Medieval People*, 1–6

Snappy Sounds series

*Whiz Kids Reading Fun*, 1–4

*Helping Your Child with Homework*

*Smarty Cat*, 1–12

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