

## **Building Reading Habits in Children by Umesh Malhotra, Chief Executive Director, Hippocampus Reading Foundation.**

A child should have the opportunity to pick up a book that he/she knows he/she can read. As educators and care-givers, what techniques can you use in a school (irrespective of the economic and cultural backgrounds) to empower the students to read the books they CAN read and WANT to read (as opposed to what we want them to read)?

The answer to that vital question is the GROW BY Program created by the Hippocampus Reading Foundation. This is a methodology suitable for any school anywhere. It is being followed by a multitude of schools across the country and is rapidly growing in countries all over the world.

The 5 aspects which are absolutely necessary to ensure that the students have the opportunities to read are mentioned below.

- Non negotiable :  
Interesting collection of books which students at various reading levels can utilize.  
Conducive space dedicated to books and reading.  
Allocation of time as often and as long as developing a strong habit requires.
- Assess the reading level of each student and let them know it.
- Excite students to want to read their choice of books.  
Lure them into reading the book through fun activities and games if necessary. The books will eventually make them stay.
- Library should be comfort zone for the students. Learning should be fun having a ripple effect on the other children.
- Train librarians to be equipped with the reading levels and schedules of the school.