



Cheat Sheet by Allison Burr

Episode 9

A University Professor's Perspective on Reading Aloud

Guest: Catherine Pakaluk, PhD

Meet Catherine Pakaluk	2
In this Episode	2
Cheater's Guide	3
Major Takeaways	4
Show Notes	5

Meet Catherine Pakaluk

Dr. Catherine Pakaluk is an assistant professor of economics at [Ave Maria University](#) in southwest Florida. She holds a doctorate and a master's degree from Harvard University and is the mother of seven children. Dr. Pakaluk speaks about reading aloud from the unique perspective of both a mother of many children and an accomplished college professor.

In this Episode

In this episode, Dr. Pakaluk shares why students who have been read aloud to fare better than their peers in college, how she carves out time to make reading aloud a priority as a working mother, and why even five minutes a day can add up to a whole heck of a lot of reading.

Dr. Pakaluk also discusses the role reading aloud plays in the lives of children as they grow older and pursue college education, and what value it offers to children who might not otherwise be considered intellectual or bookish.

Cheater's Guide

Use this guide to skip to parts that most interest you, or [listen to the entire podcast](#).

- 3:12 Dr. Pakaluk's unique family culture of learning, books, and study.
- 5:26 Dr. Pakaluk's views on the role reading aloud plays in preparing kids for college – specifically Dr. Joseph Price's work on the effects of parents reading aloud to children.
- 8:44 An economist's look at the holy grail of raising students' test scores.
- 11:11 If a college student has come from a reading culture, professors can tell a big difference.
- 12:44 The connection between being read aloud to and oral presentation.
- 13:47 The critical importance of needing to hear through your ear properly formed and highly sophisticated language patterns: let's pronounce words correctly!
- 15:08 The value of maintaining a collective governance over the English language and ensuring we are pronouncing words correctly in our own home. One solution: books on tape.
- 17:28 Reading aloud makes a particularly big difference in the reading of poetry, which is meant to be read aloud, not just seen on the page.
- 21:55 What if my child is not literary, or wants to be an engineer, lawyer or math professor?
- 26:46 The value of being read to: bonding and building relationships.
- 33:55 Be encouraged: even 5 minutes a day will add up!
- 36:12 Tips/tricks for fitting in reading aloud.
- 39:53 Some of Dr. Pakaluk's family favorites: fairy tales, *Anne of Green Gables*, G.A. Henty, and biographies.
- 42:22 An introduction to Ave Maria University.

One of the most clear ways where you can see the difference in the kids who have been read to is actually their ability to speak with confidence in the classroom.... You ask students to read things in class.... And the book goes around the room and it is sort of discouraging that the book stops. Many students who test fairly well are not capable of actually themselves reading aloud.

–Catherine Pakaluk

Major Takeaways

1. Reading aloud is about more than building family bonds- but it is certainly not less than that!

Economists like Dr. Joseph Price have found that one of the biggest impacts on increasing test scores is simply a parent reading aloud to his/her children. Could the most cost-effective educational reform take the shape of Mom or Dad, book in hand, snuggling up on the couch with the kids for 15 minutes every night? Let's initiate education reform today, in living rooms across America, at no cost to the taxpayers!

2. Dr. Pakaluk shared the insider knowledge of college professors -

Multitudes of college students need remedial reading help, and even those who test well are still often not equipped to read aloud. Moreover, there is a significant connection between being read to and oral presentation. Oral presentation is, at its most fundamental level, the ability to pronounce words correctly and confidently, and is a key building block to rhetoric. By reading aloud to your children, you are forming the key building blocks of college readiness and college success.

Note to parents of teens: if you haven't made reading aloud a priority, do not despair! While kids under the age of 10 may be helped most dramatically by read-alouds, reading to the older kids is just as critical, because you are building and cementing relationships. Test scores and academic success are valuable, but they pale in comparison to the bond with your children.

3. Read-aloud time doesn't have to rest exclusively on the shoulders (and voices) of Mom and Dad.

Don't discount the helpful role of audiobooks. Books narrated by non-American accents provide an instructive and enjoyable method for listening to the classics, with an ear to proper pronunciation.

See [Episode 14](#) for a surplus of excellent tips and tricks for incorporating audiobooks into the rhythm of family life.

Show Notes

- Links to Dr. Joseph Price’s research, which Dr. Pakaluk references on the show: [The Effect of Parental Time Investments](#), [Time vs. Money- Which Resources Matter for Children?](#), [The Time Use of Teenagers](#).
- [Storynory](#) – free audio stories read every week by Natasha Gostwick and friends.
- [Books Should Be Free](#) (now Loyal Books) – lots of free audiobooks, especially classics.
- Dr. Pakaluk likes the books recommended in [The Well-Trained Mind](#); her kids enjoy [Anne of Green Gables](#), [Little House on the Prairie](#), and books by [G.A. Henty](#).
- Sarah recommends everything published by [Bethlehem Books](#).
- [Ave Maria University](#) is a thriving college that emphasizes truth and beauty in the hearts and minds of its students. They especially [welcome homeschool students](#) – about one-third of students at Ave Maria University were homeschooled all the way through high school.

To find more resources to help you build your family culture around books, visit [ReadAloudRevival.com](#).