Older kids still like to read with parents, survey shows

By Nadine Wimmer

PARK CITY — Dozens of parents attending McPolin Elementary School already knew the importance of family reading.

"Very important," said dad Peter Odoherty. "I tried to read to them as much as possible when they were younger. Now, I let them read by themselves as much as possible."

That's exactly what most parents do, according to a new survey from Scholastic. But many kids wish they were still reading with their parents.

The survey found 54 percent of kids under the age of 5 are read to by their parents, almost every day; about 33 percent of kids ages 6 to 8 read aloud with parents; but only 17 percent of kids ages 9 to 11 read with their parents. About 40 percent of those kids wish their parents would still read with them, the survey found.

"It's fun because you get to learn," said Casey Cummings, a student who reads by himself but still likes to read with his mom.

When asked her preference, student Samantha Sheridan said, "I read to my mom."

The survey provides reassurance to parents who find that proverbial "20 minutes a day" to read with their children. It also demonstrates how much kids enjoy it.

Eighty-three percent of the kids surveyed said they "loved it" or "liked it a lot" when they were read to at home by their mom or dad.

It's not the stories they enjoy; it's the connection.

Beth Cummings, president of McPolin Elementary's Parent Teacher Organization, understands. She said it's the same reason she cherishes reading time with her kids.

"It is the time spent alone with my kids, quiet time," Cummings said.

KSL's Read Today program supports schools and families to help children gain a love of reading. Initiative manager Lizzy Reano hopes this research reminds parents that their kids appreciate the effort.

"Reading at home with our children is one of the best investments we can make in their future," she said. "And now we can see kids don't outgrow the desire to read with their parents."