

TIPS | for parents of Third Graders

Read about it, talk about it, and think about it! Find ways for your child to build understanding, the ultimate goal of learning how to read. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ Make books special.

Turn reading into something special. Take your kids to the library, help them get their own library card, read with them, and buy them books as gifts. Have a favorite place for books in your home or, even better, put books everywhere.

■ Get them to read another one.

Find ways to encourage your child to pick up another book. Introduce him or her to a series like *The Boxcar Children* or *Harry Potter* or to a second book by a favorite author, or ask the librarian for additional suggestions

■ Crack open the dictionary.

Let your child see you use a dictionary. Say, "Hmm, I'm not sure what that word means... I think I'll look it up."

■ Talk about what you see and do.

Talk about everyday activities to build your child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together, visiting somewhere new, or after watching a TV show.

■ First drafts are rough.

Encourage your child when writing. Remind him or her that writing involves several steps. No one does it perfectly the first time.

■ Different strokes for different folks.

Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of writing. Some kids, especially boys, prefer nonfiction books.

■ Teach your child some "mind tricks."

Show your child how to summarize a story in a few sentences or how to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend and remember.

■ "Are we there yet?"

Use the time spent in the car or bus for wordplay. Talk about how *jam* means something you put on toast as well as cars stuck in traffic. How many other homonyms can your child think of? When kids are highly familiar with the meaning of a word, they have less difficulty reading it.

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