

Dear Families,

3-22-20

I hope that you are all doing well during these trying times. I miss seeing my “Reading Buddies” during this closure and I have been thinking about them daily.

As I was searching for ideas to share with the families of my reading students, I came across an article from GreatSchools.org that I thought would be helpful for parents of First Graders. I hope you find the information below beneficial. In addition to the ideas in this article, please continue to have your child practice the words and sentences in the study book and **read everyday**.

I hope that we will be back together soon. If there is anyway that I can be of assistance to you or your family, please reach out to me by email. Stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Weiss
CVPS Reading Specialist
sweiss@cvsd.net

8 ways to keep your child's reading skills sharp when school is closed

Keep your child's reading skills from getting rusty with these activities.

by: [Valle Dwight](#) | *March 13, 2020*

Whatever your child's reading level, you can help keep them on track by engaging your child in reading activities that are both entertaining and instructive. These activities focus on language, fluency and comprehension and can be adapted for a range of ages and skill levels.

Language: Word Play

Building a strong vocabulary, including a wide variety of descriptive words, will help your child improve their reading skills as they encounter increasingly complex texts. You can play these simple games when you're hanging out at home.

- **“What's another word for....?”** Your child gets points for every synonym they can come up with. Ask your child, for example, “What's another word for couch?” They'll likely suggest ‘sofa’ or ‘futon.’ To help them build their vocabulary, you can add ‘divan’ and ‘settee.’
- **Sentence building.** Special educator Jennifer Little, PhD, recommends constructing sentences to help your child enhance and use their descriptive language. Start with a flower, for example, and ask your child the color of the flower. Then create a full sentence (“The flower is red,”) and ask them to repeat it. Ask for more information about the flower. If your child says that the flower has green leaves, help them incorporate that detail into the sentence: “The red flower has green leaves.” Keep building until your child has created a long sentence, for example, “The red flower with green leaves grows under the trees in my backyard.”
- **Board games.** Boggle, Scrabble, Bananagrams, and other word games provide hours of entertaining word play. You can create a system of bonus points for longer words, or words your child has recently learned. Have a tournament and get the entire family involved!

Fluency: Read Me a Story

- Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and smoothly. The absolute best way to improve fluency is to read aloud with your child, says Landmark School's Robert Kahn. "That one to one time is the key." When your child reads aloud to you, they get reading practice, and when you read aloud to them, you're modeling fluency. That's not all: the shared experience helps your child create positive associations with reading.
- **Ham it up.** Take turns reading with your child. You can alternate page by page or character by character. When it's your turn, read with expression, and encourage your child to do the same. Let your inner ham shine!
- **Make your own audiobook.** Practice reading a favorite story with your child until they feel comfortable and familiar with it. Then, fire up the audio recorder on your cell phone or computer and record the results. Play the recording back so your child can hear how they sound, and then do it again until they're happy with the result. When you have a polished version, present it as a gift to a friend or grandparent – and be sure to save a copy for yourself!

Comprehension: Build a Better Reader

Some children have little trouble with the mechanics of reading but struggle to identify key points in a story and understand its themes. Posing questions and helping your child engage more deeply with what they're reading will help sharpen their comprehension skills.

- **Mental movies.** Ask your child to visualize the scene in the story you're reading to help them link words with imagery, suggests educational psychologist Melanie West. Read a few paragraphs to your child, then ask how they picture the scene. If they have trouble visualizing it, look back at the text and help them find descriptive words and phrases. Ask them to imagine and describe how the scene might appear in a movie. Have paper and markers on hand in case they want to sketch her mental image.
- **What happens next?** After reading a few paragraphs of a story, ask your child if they can predict what is going to happen next. What will happen if the rabbit steals the carrots? Will the farmer catch the rabbit? How will the story end? If the book has pictures, encourage your child to look at them carefully for clues.
- **Reading with purpose.** Help your child practice reading with a particular goal in mind. For example, before your child begins reading a chapter of a book, pose a question or two, so they can look for answers as they read. For example, "When you're finished with this chapter, tell me two things the main character says to his dog." Or ask what time of year a particular story takes place. Does your child think it's summer or winter? How can they tell?

About the author: Valle Dwight

Valle Dwight is a reporter, writer, and mother of two school-aged boys. She has written for many magazines, including *FamilyFun*, *Wondertime*, and *Working Mother*.

