

Daily Reading and Reading Strategies

One of the best ways you can support your beginning reader is by making reading time a priority. Listen to him read every evening. Here are some tips for making the most out of this time.

- Make each reading time a positive, encouraging experience for your child. Point out things that he is doing well.
- Beginning readers will memorize books at first. This is one of the earlier stages of learning to read.
- Talk about the title of the book and ask your child to make a prediction about what it might be about.
- As your child reads, talk with him about what is happening in the story. Discuss characters' feelings and make predictions.
- Encourage your beginning reader to point to each word as she reads. She is learning that one spoken word must match one written word of text.
- When your child comes to an unknown word, wait five seconds before saying anything.
- Help your child learn that good readers synthesize the use of strategies to figure out unknown words.

Below are some things that you can say when your child comes to a word that he is not familiar with. To help your child figure out an unknown word, you can say...

“What sounds do you know?” Tell your child the sounds of any letters or letter combinations that he does not know. Have your child say the sounds of the word and blend the sounds together.

“See if you can find a little word inside of the bigger word.” (If your child can read the word ‘or’, she may be able to use that knowledge to figure out the word ‘port’.)

“See if you can find a part of the word that you recognize.” (If your child knows the word part ‘ing’, he may be able to use that knowledge to figure out the word ‘thing’. If “ing” is a suffix added to the end of a word, have your child cover the suffix and figure out the base word and then blend the base word and suffix together.)

“That word looks like another word you know.” Show him the similar word. (If he can read the word ‘look’, he can use that knowledge to figure out the word ‘cook’.)

“Now reread to make it sound like a sentence.”

It is okay to tell your child the word once he/she has attempted to decode the word using phonics knowledge. There may be patterns within the word that your child has not yet been exposed to or mastered.

Reading Practice

Struggling readers need daily practice in reading aloud. Use the strategies below to guide your child's reading.

Problem Solving Strategies for Parents

A good reader is one who can figure out (problem-solve) words he doesn't know. A good reader has a repertoire of strategies to draw from, and can flexibly make use of these as needed. You can help by being aware of what some of these strategies are, and prompting your child to make use of the strategies he knows rather than problem-solving for him.

1. Your child should monitor his reading. He will try to make words and picture agree or match. Looking puzzled, stopping, trying it again by starting over, are all signals that let you know that he is aware that something isn't quite right.

PARENTS: It is important that the child do the monitoring. Do not "help" too quickly. Give your child thinking time. If your child really is stuck, after allowing time, you can ask: "Was that okay?" "Why did you stop?" "What did you notice?" "Was there something tricky in that sentence? Show me."

2. Your child should self-correct his errors

PARENTS: Allow time for him to fix his errors. The child must take the first step. The child may reread the sentence to support his attempts to figure out a hard word.

3. Your child should cross-check his strategy use. He should be checking to see if his attempt makes sense.

PARENTS: If your child becomes frustrated and doesn't know what to do you may want to use one of the following prompts to help him on his way:

"Can you "code" the word? "Do you know a word that looks like this word?" "What sounds do you know?" "What sounds do you need help with?" "Start at the beginning and say each sound. Now blend the sounds together. Does it sound like a word you know?"

Remember, it is very important that your child do the reading work, not you! Give sufficient time for your child to try and try again.

Tips to encourage reading and writing

Keep books and magazines in your child's room. They will choose reading more often if books and magazines are there.

Carry books along when you go to the dentist, doctor, or places you may have to wait.

Have your child help with a family message center. Children love the sense of accomplishment – and helping! – when they seek out items from the shopping list. At the same time you are getting your child to read – while seemingly doing something else. Keep grocery lists, chore lists, messages, shopping lists, “love notes,” etc.

Read recipes. All reading doesn't happen in books. When you are cooking, ask your child to read the ingredients to you.

Read road signs. While you are driving, ask your child to read the road signs: Stop, Yield, One Way, street signs, or maps.

Utilize audiobooks. You may lack time to read to your child as much as you would like, but that is no reason your child should be denied this pleasure.

Encourage your child to keep a daily journal.

Vary the writing your children do at home for different audiences and for different purposes. (Pen Pals, thank you notes, invitations, wish lists, journal of exciting events and let them include pictures, stories, email and blog, etc...)

Encourage creativity and the enjoyment of writing.

Model reading and writing for your children.