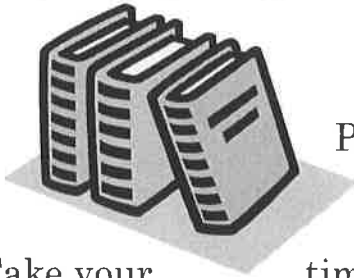


# Building Comprehension Skills At Home



Parents can build their very young child's comprehension during story time with the strategies of elaboration and questions.

Take your time as you read a picture book to your child. Talk about what is happening in the story. Relate the pictures to the story. Ask questions about what might be coming next, what the character is feeling, what your child thinks about the character's actions. Relate the story to events in the child's life. By doing so, you make a story personal so that the child thinks about the story as you are reading.

Comprehension integrates the other skills of reading - word recognition, fluency, vocabulary - so that by the middle elementary grades, the child has moved from learning to read to reading to learn. If any of the other reading skills are weak, then comprehension will be lower and achievement in later grades will be more difficult. But, older kids can still learn comprehension strategies that will help them read to learn and continue to become better readers.

The latest research in reading comprehension finds that even beginning readers can learn strategies to improve comprehension. As you practice reading with your children at home, try these comprehension-building strategies.

## ✓ **When Choosing a Book...**

Pick a book that has a topic that is familiar to your child - sports, students, sisters and brothers, school, something that he can relate to and for which he has some life experience or knowledge.

### ✓ **Before Reading a Book...**

Have your child handle it, flip through it, find the title, the author, the illustrator. Read the table of contents. Look at the pictures. Ask, "What do you think this book is about?"

### ✓ **As You Read...**

You may be reading to the child or practicing paired reading. Stop at natural points in the reading and check the child's comprehension. Ask questions such as "Where are they? What just happened? How would you feel if someone did that? Do you know anyone like that? What do you think will happen next?" You can change the questions depending on the type of material you are reading. But, the point of the questions should be to

- monitor your child's comprehension of the text;
- relate the meaning of the text to their own knowledge and experience;
- predict and prepare to comprehend the next section of the text.

If while monitoring, your child can't answer a question correctly, then go back and read again to find the answer. To prevent frustration, only reread a section once and then give him a clue from the text to answer correctly. Don't get too bogged down; if you are, the text may be too difficult for your child.

By following these simple strategies consistently with your child, you are teaching the skills that excellent readers use every time they read. They form the basis for reading to learn in the later grades, when the child will learn to

- skim for chapter and heading titles, graphics and text structure;
- predict what the text will be about and have a goal for reading the material;

- relate the material to their own knowledge and experience;
- visualize the setting, characters, and action while reading;
- interact with text through questioning and monitoring their understanding of the material;
- identify the main points and summarize the meaning of text.

Have fun helping your child learn to love reading!