

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Bartlett City Schools

Increase the fun factor in your family's regular reading routines

Reading together every day is one of the most important things you can do for your child's academic success. To build excitement about reading:

- **Find new reading spots.** Pick fun, unusual places to read. Build a fort with blankets and couch cushions. Or, bundle up and read outside.
- **Read as a team.** Have your child follow words with a finger while you read. Or, take turns reading pages to each other.
- **Plan a performance.** Choose a favorite passage to recite and help your child master it.
- **Find a book-inspired** craft activity to complete together after reading a book.
- **Celebrate reading success.** When your child reaches a goal (such as 100 reading minutes in a week), do something special!



Practice using synonyms and antonyms with the whole family

Here's a simple way to work on *synonyms* (words with the same meaning) and *antonyms* (words with the opposite meaning) with your child during family time. Divide two pieces of paper into three columns. Then:

1. **In the first column,** describe yourselves in positive terms. For example, "I am ... kind, generous."
2. **In the second column,** write a synonym for each word. ("I am ... nice, giving.")
3. **In the third column,** write an antonym for each word. ("I am not ... mean, stingy.")
4. **Exchange pages.** Read about each other. Then play the game again—this time describing the other person.

Serve the community by reading aloud to others

Does your elementary schooler enjoy reading aloud? If so, your young reader can brighten other people's days by reading to them.

Together, research places where you and your child can volunteer to read to others. Look into:

- **Local day care centers.**
- **After-school programs.**
- **Retirement homes.**
- **Libraries.**
- **Community centers.**



A dictionary game builds your child's vocabulary

Open a dictionary to any page. Have your child point to a place on the page without looking. Then, try to define the word closest to where your child pointed. Take turns being the pointer and guesser. A correct definition equals one point. See who can get to 10 points first.



Children need fluency role models

Did you know that just by reading to your child, you are building your child's fluency? When you set an example by reading smoothly—with emotion and enthusiasm—you show that good reading is similar to talking. It flows with ease. Other ways to do this are to listen to audiobooks together and attend library story times.

To foster fluency, have your child read aloud to you and other family members regularly.



Strategies for reading nonfiction texts

Reading nonfiction text is a lot different from reading a novel. To develop the skills needed to get the most from assigned readings, encourage your child to:

- **Preview the text.** Before reading, have your child skim the text and look at the pictures, headings and words in bold type. Your child should ask, “What do I already know about the topic and what do I expect to learn?”
- **Use active reading strategies.** Your child can take notes and summarize small sections.
- **Think analytically.** Your child should think about how the text relates to real-world examples or personal experiences. Does your child know the author’s purpose?
- **Extend learning.** Suggest your child research related topics and find additional sources of information.



Comprehension improves with movement

Research suggests that students can improve their reading comprehension and memory by moving around and acting out what they’ve read. Acting out a phrase or a passage can help kids make connections between the words on a page and real actions. After reading a story with your child:

- **Plan a puppet show** and act out a few scenes from the story together.
- **Dress up as characters** and use props from around the house to reenact exciting scenes.
- **Challenge your child** to act out the story as you read it aloud.



Source: M.P. Kaschak and others, “Enacted Reading Comprehension: Using Bodily Movement to Aid the Comprehension of Abstract Text Content,” *PLOS ONE*, Public Library of Science.



Q: Playing video games is my child’s favorite activity. How can I get my child to spend more time reading instead?

A: It can be difficult to motivate some kids to read—especially when there are so many entertainment options available. Place limits on recreational screen time. Keep irresistible reading materials around the

house. Many young readers love magazines and graphic novels. Look for materials based on your child’s favorite shows or games.

Make your own greeting cards!

Making greeting cards is a creative activity that involves reading and writing. With your child, make a list of birthdays, holidays and other events. Then, your child can create a special card for each by decorating the front of a folded sheet of paper and writing a short message inside.

Encourage your child to read cards in stores to get ideas about what to write.

For lower elementary readers:

- ***Luke on the Loose*** by Harry Bliss. What’s it like to be a pigeon in New York? Luke finds out when he chases a flock in this comic-book adventure.
- ***Chloe and the Lion*** by Mac Barnett. When Chloe gets lost in the woods, an argument breaks out between this book’s author and illustrator, who have different views of how the story should end.



For upper elementary readers:

- ***Because of Mr. Terupt*** by Rob Buyea (Yearling). Seven fifth-grade students start their school year, each bringing a unique perspective to Mr. Terupt’s class.
- ***The New Kid*** by Mavis Jukes. Carson is moving from a small school where he knows everyone to a new town and a new school. Join him for all of the adventures he has in store!

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