

Building Readers[®]

Pollard School Reading Room
Ms. Tozier and Mrs. Rockwell

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Boost comprehension with simple steps

The older your child gets, the more he will use textbooks to learn. He'll need strong reading comprehension (the ability to understand what he reads) to do his best in school.

To build reading comprehension at home:

- **Read aloud.** This slows down reading and helps your child "process" words.
- **Read to relax.** Give your child easy-to-read books that make reading fun.
- **Reread.** Reading things more than once familiarizes your child with new words.
- **Supplement reading.** Find interesting, non-intimidating materials on school topics.
- **Discuss reading.** Ask questions that encourage thinking, such as, "Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?"

Source: "Reluctant Readers," Scholastic, www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/gr3_5/qc_readingcomp.htm.



Tip

If your child is learning to read, think of the journey as a "marathon," not a "sprint." Sometimes she may seem to be running in place. But with practice and patience, she'll make progress.

Source: John Edelson, "Helping Your Child Learn to Read," A to Z Home's Cool, <http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/articles/031806.htm>.

Using resources

Most learning disabilities involve reading, according to LDOnline.com (www.ldonline.com). That's why the site offers so much help with this issue. Click "reading" in the left column. Then enjoy a list of resources designed to help you help your child.

Improve vocabulary at any age

Older kids may have large vocabularies, but they still need to learn new words. This is an essential part of their growth as readers. Encourage your child to read a variety of materials. This will introduce him to new concepts. When he finds a topic he likes, help him investigate it further. For example, if he loves baseball, he might learn what the terms "RBI" and "line up" mean.

Source: "Improving the Reading Achievement of America's Children: 10 Research-Based Principles," Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, www.ciera.org/library/instresrc/principles/.



Get organized with 'word webs'

Word webs can help your child see how words and ideas are connected. Put one concept in the center, such as "space," and then draw lines to other words, like "galaxies" and "exploration." Keep linking ideas. This is a fun, visual way for your child to organize information.

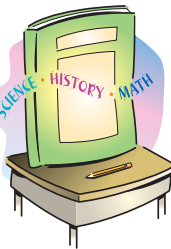


Q: Why are reading skills emphasized in every class (even math)?

A: To succeed in school, kids must read "across the curriculum." In other words, they have to read about many topics, such as science, history and math. They also need to understand what they read. That's why support from every teacher helps.

Source: "Reading Across the Curriculum," Prince George's County [Maryland] Public Schools, www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~elc/readingacross.html.

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.



Go online to learn about reading development

Are you confused about how kids learn to read? Are you unsure about where to get help? The best resource is your child's teacher. But many other sources can help, too. For example, visit:

- **PBS** at www.PBS.org/parents. Click on "Reading and Language." This site offers easy-to-use, age-by-age advice.
- **The National Council of Teachers of English** at www.NCTE.org/parents. You'll find helpful articles on a variety of topics.
- **The U.S. Department of Education** at www.ed.gov/parents. Click on "Help My Child Read" to see a list of materials. Many are also available in Spanish.



Reading term of the month

Invented spelling

When young kids use "invented spelling," they write words to match sounds (such as "lkd" for liked)—and that's okay!

Try energetic activities to teach your child sight words

Sight words are common words your child should recognize quickly. Knowing them makes reading much easier. Some examples include *and*, *for*, *but* and *said*.



Learning sight words can be fun—even if your child has trouble sitting still. Try creative spelling activities such as:

- **Chop wood.** Swing a make-believe ax once for each letter in a word. Then shout the word followed by, "Timber!"

- **Weight lift.** Say one letter per "repetition" (every time your child lifts an imaginary weight). After spelling the word, say it aloud and "put away" the weight.
- **Blast-off.** Have your child pretend she is "blasting off" while spelling a word. She should crouch down and then rise slowly, blasting off on the last letter!

Source: "Practice with Sight Words," Literacy Connections, <http://literacyconnections.com/SightWordPractice.html>.

For Lower Elementary readers:

Trouble on the T-ball Team, by Eve Bunting (Clarion Books).

Every player on the T-ball team has lost something this season.

Can your child guess what it is before the story ends?

The Foot Book, by Dr. Seuss (Random House). Who knew feet could be so fascinating? Dr. Seuss, of course. Beginning readers will be proud to reach the last page—all by themselves.

For Upper Elementary readers:

Island of the Blue Dolphins, by Scott O'Dell (Yearling). Could a young girl survive alone on an island? This beautiful book provides a surprising answer.



A Swiftly Tilting Planet, by Madeleine L'Engle (Yearling). This classic book, part of the *A Wrinkle in Time* series, addresses universal themes in a riveting time-travel adventure.

Create 'family reading time'



A good way to promote reading is to make sure the whole family reads together. This doesn't mean reading aloud to your child 100 percent of the time—it just means reading together. Maybe that means you're reading your newspaper while your child is reading a children's book on her own.

All you need is:

- **Something** for you to read.
- **Something** for your child to read.
- **About half an hour** (or longer, if you wish).
- **A comfy spot** to snuggle up together.

When your child sees you reading—and that you enjoy reading—it will make her want to read, too.

Source: Bernice Cullinan and Brod Bagert, "Family Reading Activities," Reading Rockets, www.readingrockets.org/article/385.

“

Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are.”

—Mason Cooley

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