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Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear and distinguish sounds. This includes:

- Recognizing sounds, alone and in words
- Adding sounds to words
- Taking apart words and breaking them into their different sounds
- Moving sounds

Phonemic Awareness Activities



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Play “I’m thinking of a word” where you say “I’m thinking of a word that rhymes with the word _____. For example, “I am thinking of a word that rhymes with dog”.
- ☐ Play a game in which you say a compound word and your child has to break apart all the sounds. For example, you say ice cream, and ask your child for the first part in ice cream, which is ice.
- ☐ Play the “Name Game.” “shirley, Shirley bo burley, banana fana fo furley...” Change the names to names your child knows.
- ☐ Say a sentence aloud and ask your child to determine how many words were in the sentence.
- ☐ Explain that rhymes are words that sound the same at the end.
- ☐ Prompt your child to produce rhymes. Ask, “Can you tell me a word that rhymes with ‘cake’?”
- ☐ Read books over and over again containing rhymes.
- ☐ Orally provide pairs of words that rhyme and pairs that do not rhyme (EX; pan/man; pat/boy). Ask, “Do ‘pan’ and ‘man’ rhyme? Why? Do ‘pat’ and ‘boy’ rhyme? Why not?”
- ☐ Sing rhyming songs like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” or “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”
- ☐ Sing nursery rhymes and other child-friendly songs together.
- ☐ Play “I am thinking”. “I am thinking of something that begins with the /w/ sounds (window). I am thinking of something that begins with the /t/ sound. You will find them in your mouth (teeth).”
- ☐ Play “What’s the first sound?”. Using important people’s names or objects to your child, ask what’s the first sound you hear in dad or mom?”.



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Phonemic Awareness Activities

GRADES
K-1

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Play “I Spy” with your child, but instead of giving a color say, “I spy something that starts with /b/,” or “I spy something with these sounds, /d/ /ö/ /g/.” Have your child do the same.
- ☐ Play a game in which you say a word and your child has to break apart all the sounds. Ask your child to stretch out a word like dog - he/she can pretend to stretch the word with a rubber band. Your child should say /d/ /ö/ /g/.
- ☐ Play the “Silly Name Game.” Replace the first letter of each family member’s name with a different letter. For example, “Tob” for “Bob”, “Watt” for “Matt,” etc.
- ☐ Say a sentence aloud and ask your child to determine how many words were in the sentence.
- ☐ Explain that rhymes are words that sound the same at the end.
- ☐ Read books over and over again containing rhymes.
- ☐ As you read, have your child complete the rhyming word at the end of each line.
- ☐ Orally provide pairs of words that rhyme and pairs that do not rhyme (EX; pan/man; pat/boy). Ask, “Do ‘pan’ and ‘man’ rhyme? Why? Do ‘pat’ and ‘boy’ rhyme? Why not?”
- ☐ Prompt your child to produce rhymes. Ask, “Can you tell me a word that rhymes with ‘cake’?”
- ☐ Sing rhyming songs like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” or “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”



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GRADES
K-1

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Give your child a small car (such as a Matchbox car). Write a 3-4 letter word on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.
- ☐ To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words:
 - Give your child three to five blocks, beads, bingo chips or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word.
 - Play “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound and knees for the third while saying each sound.
 - “Jump for Sounds.” Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.

Phonemic Awareness Activities

GRADES

2-3

Reading Activities for the Home

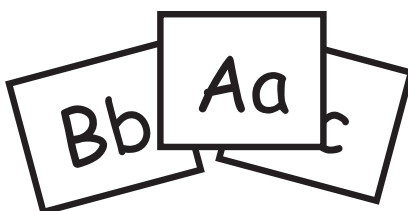
- ☐ Demonstrate clapping a word into its syllables. Ask your child to clap words into syllables.
- ☐ Make tally marks for the number of syllables in the names of people in your family, favorite foods, etc.
- ☐ Give your child a small car (such as a Matchbox car). Write a word containing five or more letters on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.
- ☐ To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words:
 - Give your child four to seven blocks, beads, bingo chips or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word.
 - Play “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound and knees for the third while saying each sound.
 - “Jump for Sounds.” Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.



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Phonics

Phonics is the ability to understand the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent. This includes:

- Recognizing print patterns that represent sounds
- Syllable patterns
- Word parts (prefixes, suffixes and root words)

Common Consonant Digraphs and Blends:

bl, br, ch, ck, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gh, gl, gr, ng, ph, pl, pr, qu, sc, sh, sk, sl, sm,
sn, sp, st, sw, th, tr, tw, wh, wr

Common Consonant Trigraphs

nth, sch, scr, shr, spl, spr, squ, str, thr

Common Vowel Digraphs

ai, au, aw, ay, ea, ee, ei, eu, ew, ey, ie, oi, oo, ou, ow, oy



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Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Make letter-sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- ☐ Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds and/or name of the letter (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter d).
- ☐ Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name.
- ☐ Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child's name (for example, John and jump). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- ☐ Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, "I am thinking of something on the page that starts with /t/."
- ☐ Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.
- ☐ Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter m matches the /m/ sound as in man).
- ☐ Make letter-sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in shaving cream or sand.
- ☐ Using two sets of letters, show your child one letter from your set, and ask your child to find that letter from their set. For example, you hold a "b" and ask your child to find a "b".



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Labeling words:** Label objects in your home and talk about the beginning sound on the label.
- ☐ **Hunting for words:** Say a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is “m,” the child might find and write mop, mat, Mom, money and microwave.
- ☐ Teach your child to recognize the letters in his or her name.
- ☐ **Hunting for letters:** Say a letter and ask your child to find them in a group of letters.



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Use magnetic letters to spell words on the refrigerator or spell names of family members and friends.
- ☐ Discuss how names are similar and different.
- ☐ Use stores as an opportunity for learning! Ask questions like, "Can you find something that has starts with a /k/ sound? Can you find a word that begins with an /m/ sound? Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.
- ☐ Make alphabet letters out of Play-doh®.
- ☐ Write letters with your finger on your child's back and have them guess the letter. Have your child do the same to you.
- ☐ Play "Memory" or "Go Fish" using alphabet cards.
- ☐ Read alphabet books to your child and eventually ask him/her to name the items on the page that you know he/she can successfully tell you.

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Use magnetic letters to spell words on the refrigerator or spell names of family members and friends.
- ☐ Discuss how names are similar and different.
- ☐ Recognizing shapes is the beginning of recognizing the features of letters. Have your child sort letters by tall tails, short tails, hooks, humps and circles. Your child can continue to sort by feature combinations as well (Ex: circles and tall tails, hooks and circles, humps and tall tails, etc.).
- ☐ Ask your child to name stores, restaurants and other places that have signs. This is called environmental print. Have your child cut the images of these signs from bags, take-out containers and fliers, and post them somewhere to make an Environmental Print Word Wall.
- ☐ Ask your child to look through ads to point out things he/she recognizes. Ask if they know any of the letters on the page.
- ☐ Use stores as an opportunity for learning! Ask questions like, "Can you find something that has a letter C? Can you find a word that begins with an M? Can you find something with 4 letters?" Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.
- ☐ Make alphabet letters out of Play-doh®.
- ☐ Write letters with your finger on your child's back and have them guess the letter. Have your child do the same to you.
- ☐ Play "Memory" or "Go Fish" using alphabet cards.
- ☐ Read alphabet books to your child and eventually ask him/her to name the items on the page that you know he/she can successfully tell you.

Reading Activities for the Home

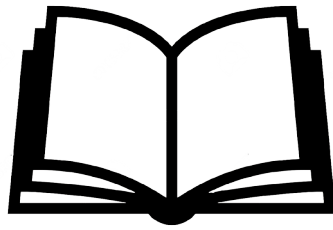
- ☐ **Making words:** For this game, you will need magnetic letters and three bags. Put half of the consonants into the first bag. Put the vowels into the middle bag and put the remaining consonants into the last bag. Have your child pull one letter from the first bag. That will be the first letter of their word. Then have your child pull from the vowel bag for the second letter of the word and from the other consonant bag for the third letter of the word. Next, the child will read the word and decide if it is a real word or a nonsense word. Take turns, replacing the vowels as needed until there are no more consonants left.
- ☐ **Labeling words:** When reading with your child, keep Post-it notes handy. Every so often, have your child choose one object in the picture and write the word on a Post-it. Put the note in the book to read each time you come to that page.
- ☐ **Practicing words with pictures:** Choose pictures from a magazine or catalog. Say the name of the picture and have your child say the sound that the picture begins with and the name of that letter.
- ☐ **Hunting for words:** Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is “m,” the child might find and write mop, mat, Mom, money and microwave.
- ☐ Hints for helping your child sound out words:
 - **First Sound:** Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture or surrounding words. Double-check the printed word to see if it matches the child’s guess.
 - **Sound and Blend:** Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t). This is called “sounding it out,” then say the sounds together (sat). This is “blending.”
 - **Familiar Parts:** When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as “presenting,” your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word “sent,” and the word ending -ing.
- ☐ Teach your child to recognize the letters in his or her name.

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Make letter-sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- ☐ Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters “p-e-n” spell pen, how do you spell hen?).
- ☐ Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter d).
- ☐ Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name.
- ☐ Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child’s name (for example, John and jump). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- ☐ Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, “I am thinking of something that starts with /t/.”
- ☐ Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.
- ☐ Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter m matches the /m/ sound as in man).
- ☐ Make letter-sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.
- ☐ **Building words:** Using magnetic letters, make a three letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, sat, mat, rat, pat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Make blend-sounds and have your child write the letters that match the sounds (for example, /sh/, /tr/, /th/).
- ☐ Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters “l-a-t-e-r” spell later, how do you spell hater? How many syllables are in later?).
- ☐ Write vowel and consonant digraphs, trigraphs and blends on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the long e sound /ē/ for the vowel digraphs ea and ee).
- ☐ **Writing words:** Many children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Send your child notes in his/her backpack or place notes on the pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child. Whenever your child receives a note, have him/her write back. Don’t be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out the words to the best of his/her ability.
- ☐ **Hunting for words:** Choose a blend and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is “bl,” the child might find and write blanket, blood, blue, blizzard, blast.
- ☐ Hints for helping your child sound out words
 - First Sound - Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture or surrounding words. Double-check the printed word to see if it matches the child’s guess.
 - Sound and Blend - Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t). This is called “sounding it out”, and then say the sounds together (sat). This is “blending”.
 - Familiar Parts - When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as “presenting,” your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word “sent,” and the word ending -ing.
- ☐ Play “Memory” or “Go Fish” using consonant and vowel digraphs, trigraphs and blends.



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read with sufficient speed, accuracy, tone and phrasing to support understanding. This includes:

- Automatic word recognition
- Accurate word recognition
- Use of expression



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ When you read a story, use appropriate expression during dialogue. Encourage your child to mimic your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- ☐ Recite nursery rhymes and poems to build familiar phrases in speech.
- ☐ In a repetitive text, ask your child to repeat the familiar phrase with you. Ex: For the story, "The House that Jack Built," your child can recite with you "in the house that Jack built."
- ☐ Read the same book many times. This helps your child in many areas in reading.



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ When you read a story, use appropriate expression during the speaking parts (dialogue). Encourage your child to copy your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- ☐ Encourage your child to sing favorite songs and repeat favorite lines of songs.
- ☐ Say a sentence to your child and ask him/her to repeat it to you. Challenge your child to increase the number of words he/she can repeat. As you say it, put it in meaningful phrases. Ex: The boy went/ to the store /with his mother.
- ☐ Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem or nursery rhyme with your child. He/ she will mimic your phrasing and expression.

Reading Activities for the Home

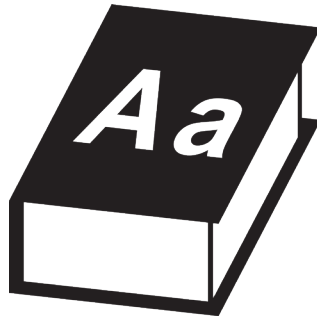
- ☐ When you read a story, use appropriate expression during the speaking parts (dialogue). Encourage your child to copy your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- ☐ Point out punctuation marks that aid in expression such as question marks, exclamation points and quotation marks. Demonstrate how your voice changes as you read for each. Only focus on one during a book. Remember it is important to enjoy it first and foremost.
- ☐ Encourage your child to sing favorite songs and repeat favorite lines of songs.
- ☐ Make your own books of favorite songs for child to practice “reading.” This builds confidence and helps your child identify him/herself as a reader.
- ☐ Say a sentence to your child and ask him/her to repeat it to you. Challenge your child to increase the number of words he/she can repeat. As you say it, put it in meaningful phrases. Ex: The boy went/ to the store /with his mother.
- ☐ Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem or nursery rhyme with your child. He/ she will mimic your phrasing and expression.

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Repeated reading:** Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child and then read it together, helping your child figure out any tricky words. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.
- ☐ **Use different voices:** When reading a familiar story or passage, try having your child use different voices. Read the story in a mouse voice, cowboy voice or a princess voice. This is another way to do repeated reading, and it adds some fun to reading practice.
- ☐ **Read to different audiences:** Reading aloud is a way to communicate to an audience. When a reader keeps the audience in mind, he/she knows that his reading must be fluent and expressive. Provide a variety of opportunities for your child to read to an audience. Your child can read to stuffed animals, pets, siblings, neighbors, grandparents - anyone who is willing to listen. This is a good way to show off what was practiced with repeated reading.
- ☐ **Record the reading:** After your child has practiced a passage, have him/her record it with a cell phone or computer. Once recorded, your child can listen to his reading and follow along in the book. Often, he/she will want to record it again and make it even better!
- ☐ When you read a story, use appropriate expression during dialogue. Encourage your child to mimic your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- ☐ Recite nursery rhymes and poems to build familiar phrases in speech.
- ☐ In a repetitive text, ask your child to repeat the familiar phrase with you. Ex: For the story, "The House that Jack Built," your child can recite with you "in the house that Jack built."

Reading Activities for the Home

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- ☐ Make your own books of favorite songs for your child to practice “reading.” This builds confidence and helps your child identify him/herself as a reader.
- ☐ Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem with your child. He/ she will mimic your phrasing and expression.



Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a student's knowledge of and memory for word meanings. This includes:

- Receptive vocabulary
Words we understand when read or spoken to us
- Expressive vocabulary
Words we know well enough to use in speaking and writing



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Read aloud:** Read aloud to your child, daily. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him/her new words and how they are used in context.
- ☐ **Preview words:** Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book. Choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- ☐ Introduce your child to a variety of experiences to help build background knowledge he/she can use while making sense of print by taking them to the park, museums, the zoo, etc.
- ☐ Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "farms" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!

GRADES
K-1

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Read aloud:** Continue to read aloud to your child even after he/she is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him/her new words and how they are used in context.
- ☐ **Preview words:** Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book. Choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- ☐ **Hot potato (version 1):** Play hot potato with synonyms. Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. For example, you may say, "Cold," and your child might say, "Freezing." Then you could say, "Chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).
- ☐ **Hot potato (version 2):** Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms.
- ☐ **Word Collecting:** Have each family member be on the look out for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- ☐ Introduce your child to a variety of experiences to help build background knowledge he/she can use while making sense of print by taking them to the park, museums, the zoo, etc.
- ☐ Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "farms" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!
- ☐ Discuss opposites (antonyms).



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GRADES
K-1

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ Discuss and show your child positional words such as beside, below, under, over, etc. Make it into a game at dinner by asking your child to place his/her fork in different places in relation to his/her plate. Ex: Put your fork above your plate.
- ☐ Use the language of books such as author, title, illustrator, title page, etc.
- ☐ Discuss ordinal words such as first, last, beginning, middle, etc.
- ☐ Talk about how things are similar/alike as well as how things are different. Ex: How is a dog like a cat? How is a dog different from a cat?
- ☐ Use a variety of words to describe feelings and emotions. For example, your child says he/she is happy. You can validate that by saying, "I'm so glad you are so joyful today! You sure look happy!"
- ☐ Trips to everyday places build vocabulary. Discuss what you are doing and seeing as you are going through the store, for example. "I'm here in the bakery. I can find donuts, cookies, and bread." Ask your child, "What else do you think I could find here?"
- ☐ When you read a book about a topic, ask him/her to tell you all the words related to it. Ex: If you read a book about a dog, he/she might say dog, puppies, toy, food, play, leash. Add other words to help expand upon what he/she says.

GRADES

2-3

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Read aloud:** Continue to read aloud to your child even after he/she is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him/her new words and how they are used in context.
- ☐ **Preview words:** Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book, choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- ☐ **Hot potato (version 1):** Play hot potato with synonyms (words with similar meanings). Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. For example, you may say, "Cold," and your child might say, "Freezing." Then you could say, "Chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).
- ☐ **Hot potato (version 2):** Play hot potato with prefixes or suffixes. The prefixes dis-, ex-, mis-, non-, pre-, re-, and un- are common. Common suffixes include -able/-ible, -ed, -er, -est, -ful, -ish, -less, -ly, -ment, and -ness.
- ☐ **Hot potato (version 3):** Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms.
- ☐ **Word Collecting:** Have each family member be on the look out for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- ☐ Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "ecosystems" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!
- ☐ When you read a book about a topic, ask him/her to tell you all the words related to it. Ex: If you read a book about dinosaurs, he/she might say Tyrannosaurus Rex, paleontologist, herbivore, carnivore, fossil. Add other words to help expand upon what he/she says.



Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand and draw meaning from text. This includes:

- Paying attention to important information
- Interpreting specific meanings in text
- Identifying the main idea
- Verbal responses to questions
- Application of new information gained through reading



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Sequencing errands:** Talk about errands that you will run today. Use sequencing words (sequence, first, next, last, finally, beginning, middle, end) when describing your trip. For example, you might say, “We are going to make three stops. First, we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store.”
- ☐ **Every day comprehension:** Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, how questions about an event in his/her day. For example, if your child attended a party, you could ask, “Who was there? What did you do? When did you have cake? Where did you go? Why did the invitation have dogs on it? How did the birthday child like the presents?” Once your child is comfortable answering these questions about his/ her experiences, try asking these questions about a book you’ve read together.
- ☐ **Think aloud:** When you read aloud to your child, talk about what you are thinking. It is your opportunity to show your child that reading is a lot more than just figuring out the words. Describe how you feel about what’s going on in the book, what you think will happen next, or what you thought about a character’s choice.

READING FICTION

- ☐ **Before reading:** Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, “What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?” This will help your child set a purpose for reading.
- ☐ **During reading:** Stop every now and then to ask your child to tell you what has happened so far or what he/she predicts will happen. You might also ask for your child’s opinion. “Do you think the character did the right thing? How do you feel about that choice?” Explain any unfamiliar words.
- ☐ **After reading:** Ask your child to retell the story from the beginning and ask for opinions, too. “What was your favorite part? Would you recommend this to a friend?”

READING NONFICTION

- ☐ **Before reading:** Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, “What do you think you’ll learn about in this book? Why?” This helps your child consider what he already knows about the topic. Look at the table of contents. You and your child may choose to read the book cover to cover or go directly to a certain chapter.



Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **During reading:** Don't forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or any other information on the page. Young readers tend to overlook these, so it's a good idea to show that the author includes lots of information in these "extras".
- ☐ **After reading:** Ask your child, "What was it mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?"

OTHER IDEAS

- ☐ Before your child reads a story, read the title and look at the cover. Ask, "What do you think will happen in the story?"
- ☐ Take a quick "book look" and encourage your child to talk about what he/she thinks about what might happen in the story.
- ☐ As your child reads, ask questions that start with who, what, where, when, why and how. If your child does not answer with an appropriate response, redirect by saying, "I think you mean a person because it was a "who" question" then restate the question.
- ☐ After you read a few pages, ask "What do you think will happen next?"
- ☐ Ask your child to talk about the beginning, middle and end of the story. You will need to model this several times first.
- ☐ Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem and solution. For example, "How did characters of the Three Bears solve the problem of the porridge being too hot?" If the child does not know, show the picture or reread the page.
- ☐ After reading, ask your child, "What was your favorite part? Show me. Why do you like that part?"
- ☐ Ask questions about character traits. Ex: "Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? How do you know?" If your child doesn't know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it. He/she may also "mimic" your answer. Encourage your child's attempts.
- ☐ Encourage deeper thinking by asking, "If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?"
- ☐ Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, "Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something? The boy who went to the zoo with his family reminds me of when we went to the zoo over the summer. What do you think?"
- ☐ As you are reading, think out loud to your child. Ask questions such as "I wonder why the boy is crying in the picture? Will he find his lost toy?" This demonstrates that reading and comprehension is an active process, not passive.
- ☐ Make puppets to help your child retell a favorite story or use stuffed animals as props to retell a story or part of a favorite story.



GRADES
K-1

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Sequencing errands:** Talk about errands that you will run today. Use sequencing words (sequence, first, next, last, finally, beginning, middle, end) when describing your trip. For example, you might say, “We are going to make three stops. First, we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store.”
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Comprehension Activities

GRADES

K-1

Reading Activities for the Home

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Adopted from the
Mississippi Department of Education
www.mde.k12.ms.us/literacy

GRADES

2-3

Reading Activities for the Home

- ☐ **Sequencing comics:** Choose a comic strip from the Sunday paper. Cut out each square and mix the squares up. Have your child put them in order and describe what is happening. Encourage your child to use words like first, second, next, finally, etc.
- ☐ **Every day comprehension:** Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, how questions about an event in his/her day. Once your child is comfortable answering these questions about his/ her experiences, try asking these questions about a book you've read together.

READING FICTION

- ☐ **Before reading:** Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?" This will help your child set purpose for reading.
- ☐ **During reading:** Stop every now and then to ask your child to tell you what has happened so far or what he/she predicts will happen. You might also ask for your child's opinion. "Do you think the character did the right thing? How do you feel about that choice?" Explain any unfamiliar words.
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- ☐ **After reading:** Ask your child, "What was it mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?"

OTHER IDEAS

- ☐ Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem and solution. For example, "How did the Wright Brothers find a solution to help their plane fly longer?" If the child does not know, show the picture or reread the page.
- ☐ Ask questions about character traits. Ex: "Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? How do you know?" If your child doesn't know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it.
- ☐ Encourage deeper thinking by asking, "If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?"
- ☐ Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, "Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something?"



TIPS | for parents of Toddlers

Being a toddler is all about ACTION. Encourage continued language development and interest in books and reading by keeping things lively and engaging. Everyday experiences are full of opportunities to engage in conversation and develop language skills. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ Don't expect your toddler to sit still for a book

Toddlers need to MOVE, so don't worry if they act out stories or just skip, romp, or tumble as you read to them. They may be moving, but they are listening.

■ Recite rhymes, sing songs, and make mistakes!

Pause to let your toddler finish a phrase or chant a refrain. Once your toddler is familiar with the rhyme or pattern, make mistakes on purpose and get caught.

■ Choose engaging books

Books featuring animals or machines invite movement and making sounds. Books with flaps or different textures to touch keep hands busy. Books with detailed illustrations or recurring items hidden in the pictures are great for exploring and discussing.

■ Keep reading short, simple, and often

Toddlers frequently have shorter attention spans than babies. Look for text that is short and simple. Read a little bit, several times a day.

■ Encourage play that involves naming, describing, and communicating

Set up a zoo with all the stuffed animals. Stage a race with the toy cars. Put your toddler in charge and ask lots of questions.

■ Every day is an adventure when you're a toddler

Choose books about everyday experiences and feelings. Your child will identify with the characters as they dress, eat, visit, nap, and play.

■ Ask questions

Take time to listen to your toddler's answers. Toddlers have strong opinions and interesting ideas about the world. Encourage your toddler to tell you what he or she thinks. You'll build language skills and learn what makes your toddler tick at the same time.

■ Play to their favorites

Read favorite stories again and again. Seek out books about things your toddler especially likes—trains, animals, the moon. These books may extend a toddler's attention span and build enthusiasm for reading.

■ Not having fun?

Try a different story or a different time during the day. Reading with a very young child is primarily about building positive experiences with books, not finishing every book you start.

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.

TIPS | for parents of Preschoolers

Read early and read often. The early years are critical to developing a lifelong love of reading. It's never too early to begin reading to your child! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ **Read together every day.**

Read to your child every day. Make this a warm and loving time when the two of you can cuddle close.

■ **Give everything a name.**

Build your child's vocabulary by talking about interesting words and objects. For example, "Look at that airplane! Those are the wings of the plane. Why do you think they are called wings?"

■ **Say how much you enjoy reading.**

Tell your child how much you enjoy reading with him or her. Talk about "story time" as the favorite part of your day.

■ **Read with fun in your voice.**

Read to your child with humor and expression. Use different voices. Ham it up!

■ **Know when to stop.**

Put the book away for awhile if your child loses interest or is having trouble paying attention.

■ **Be interactive.**

Discuss what's happening in the book, point out things on the page, and ask questions.

■ **Read it again and again.**

Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time!

■ **Talk about writing, too.**

Mention to your child how we read from left to right and how words are separated by spaces.

■ **Point out print everywhere.**

Talk about the written words you see in the world around you. Ask your child to find a new word on each outing.

■ **Get your child evaluated.**

Please be sure to see your child's pediatrician or teacher as soon as possible if you have concerns about your child's language development, hearing, or sight.

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TIPS | for parents of Kindergartners

Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ Talk to your child.

Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.

■ Say silly tongue twisters.

Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

■ Read it and experience it.

Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.

■ Use your child's name.

Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John, jump*. And they both begin with the same letter, J."

■ Play with puppets.

Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is *Mark*. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *park* rhyme with *Mark*? Does *ball* rhyme with *Mark*?"

■ Trace and say letters.

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

■ Write it down.

Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage your child to use the letters and sounds he or she is learning about in school.

■ Play sound games.

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? *m - o - p*." Hold each sound longer than normal.

■ Read it again and again.

Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.

■ Talk about letters and sounds.

Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmm."

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.

TIPS | for parents of First Graders

Give your child lots of opportunities to read aloud. Inspire your young reader to practice every day! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ **Don't leave home without it.**

Bring along a book or magazine any time your child has to wait, such as at a doctor's office. Always try to fit in reading!

■ **Once is not enough.**

Encourage your child to re-read favorite books and poems. Re-reading helps kids read more quickly and accurately.

■ **Dig deeper into the story.**

Ask your child questions about the story you've just read. Say something like, "Why do you think Clifford did that?"

■ **Take control of the television.**

It's difficult for reading to compete with TV and video games. Encourage reading as a free-time activity.

■ **Be patient.**

When your child is trying to sound out an unfamiliar word, give him or her time to do so. Remind your child to look closely at the first letter or letters of the word.

■ **Pick books that are at the right level.**

Help your child pick books that are not too difficult. The aim is to give your child lots of successful reading experiences.

■ **Play word games.**

Have your child sound out the word as you change it from *mat* to *fat* to *sat*; from *sat* to *sag* to *sap*; and from *sap* to *sip*.

■ **I read to you, you read to me.**

Take turns reading aloud at bedtime. Kids enjoy this special time with their parents.

■ **Gently correct your young reader.**

When your child makes a mistake, gently point out the letters he or she overlooked or read incorrectly. Many beginning readers will guess wildly at a word based on its first letter.

■ **Talk, talk, talk!**

Talk with your child every day about school and things going on around the house. Sprinkle some interesting words into the conversation, and build on words you've talked about in the past.

■ **Write, write, write!**

Ask your child to help you write out the grocery list, a thank you note to Grandma, or to keep a journal of special things that happen at home. When writing, encourage your child to use the letter and sound patterns he or she is learning at school.

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.



TIPS | for parents of Second Graders

Find ways to read, write, and tell stories together with your child. Always applaud your young reader and beginning story writer! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ Tell family tales.

Children love to hear stories about their family. Talk about a funny thing that happened when you were young.

■ Create a writing toolbox.

Fill a box with drawing and writing materials. Find opportunities for your child to write, such as the shopping list, thank you notes, or birthday cards.

■ Be your child's #1 fan.

Ask your child to read aloud what he or she has written for school. Be an enthusiastic listener.

■ One more time with feeling.

When your child has sounded out an unfamiliar word, have him or her re-read that sentence. Often kids are so busy figuring out a word they lose the meaning of what they've just read.

■ Invite an author to class.

Ask an author to talk to your child's class about the writing process. Young children often think they aren't smart enough if they can't sit down and write a perfect story on the first try.

■ Create a book together.

Fold pieces of paper in half and staple them to make a book. Ask your child to write sentences on each page and add his or her own illustrations.

■ Do storytelling on the go.

Take turns adding to a story the two of you make up while riding in a car or bus. Try making the story funny or spooky.

■ Point out the relationship between words.

Explain how related words have similar spellings and meanings. Show how a word like *knowledge*, for example, relates to a word like *know*.

■ Use a writing checklist.

Have your child create a writing checklist with reminders such as, "Do all of my sentences start with a capital? Yes/No."

■ Quick, quick.

Use new words your child has learned in lively flash card or computer drills. Sometimes these help kids automatically recognize and read words, especially those that are used frequently.

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.

TIPS | for parents of Third Graders

Read about it, talk about it, and think about it! Find ways for your child to build understanding, the ultimate goal of learning how to read. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ **Make books special.**

Turn reading into something special. Take your kids to the library, help them get their own library card, read with them, and buy them books as gifts. Have a favorite place for books in your home or, even better, put books everywhere.

■ **Get them to read another one.**

Find ways to encourage your child to pick up another book. Introduce him or her to a series like *The Boxcar Children* or *The Magic Tree House* or to a second book by a favorite author, or ask the librarian for additional suggestions.

■ **Crack open the dictionary.**

Let your child see you use a dictionary. Say, "Hmm, I'm not sure what that word means... I think I'll look it up."

■ **Talk about what you see and do.**

Talk about everyday activities to build your child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together, visiting somewhere new, or after watching a TV show.

■ **First drafts are rough.**

Encourage your child when writing. Remind him or her that writing involves several steps. No one does it perfectly the first time.

■ **Different strokes for different folks.**

Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of writing. Some kids, especially boys, prefer nonfiction books.

■ **Teach your child some "mind tricks".**

Show your child how to summarize a story in a few sentences or how to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend and remember.

■ **"Are we there yet?"**

Use the time spent in the car or bus for wordplay. Talk about how jam means something you put on toast as well as cars stuck in traffic. How many other homonyms can your child think of? When kids are highly familiar with the meaning of a word, they have less difficulty reading it.

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.



DIGITAL RESOURCE LIBRARY

Book Adventure

www.bookadventure.com

A reading motivation program for children in grades K-8. It offers recommended reading lists by grade level.

Tumblebooks

www.tumblebooklibrary.com

A digital book collection for students. Books are interactive and read aloud to students.

Login: remc13, Password: learn13

Suessville

www.seussville.com

The official website of all things Dr. Seuss. Includes books, games, and lots of activities to get kids excited about reading.

Storyline Online

www.storylineonline.net

Well known actors read children's books online to get kids excited about reading!

Giggle Poetry

www.gigglepoetry.com/poemcategories.aspx

Read hundreds of silly poems and rate them on the Giggle Meter. Poems are categorized by topic.

MEL (Michigan eLibrary) Storytime

www.kids.mel.org/Storytime

Includes non-fiction stories from a variety of collections. Popular collections include BookFlix, Kids InfoBits, World Book Kids.

Storybird

www.storybird.com

Get kids excited about reading by having them write their own stories.

StarFall

www.starfall.com

Help children learn to read using this audiovisual interactive site.

ReadWriteThink

www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources

Includes resources for parents to help encourage their children to read.

Story Jumper

www.storyjumper.com

Have kids create, share and read books online!

ABCya

www.abcya.com

All activities were created or approved by certified school teachers and are modeled from primary grade lessons.

Robert Munsch

www.robertmunsch.com

This popular author reads all 50 of his stories with enthusiasm and excitement. The audio can be listened to online or downloaded.



EATON REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY CONTACTS

Jennifer Eaglin
Early Literacy Consultant
jeaglin@eatonresa.org
517.541.8718

Kaytie Palmiter
Education Consultant
kpalmiter@eatonresa.org
517.541.8935

