

# A Parent Guide to Reading at Home



Want to help your child with reading at home, but aren't exactly sure what to do? Please use the following tips as a guide to help when reading with your child.

This guide will give tips on what to do when reading aloud. However, these tips are also a helpful guide for discussing a book with your child has read independently.

Children in third grade still love to be read to. Most teachers include a daily read aloud during the school day. **Reading aloud** with children gives us many opportunities to advance a child's literacy. Through our interactions with a young child, we can:

- develop general and literacy-related vocabulary
- develop story comprehension skills
- develop an understanding of the structure of stories
- strengthen the parent-child bond
- increase word recognition skills
- develop an understanding of the writing process

Parents play just as important a role in their child's literacy development. They, too, need to read aloud to their children so that the process of becoming literate can move forward. The time a parent takes to read to their child is never wasted. That time stays with the child, goes with him to school, and stays with him for the rest of his life. That time reminds the child that the most important people in his life, his parents, think that reading is a worthwhile pursuit, one that can make them turn off the TV, put aside their work, and dedicate time to only them.



## What Can You Do When Reading With Your Child?

Try to remember to do the following when you read aloud to or with your child:

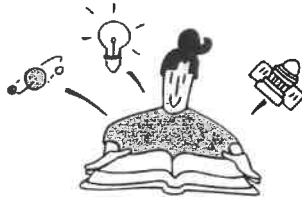
- point out the title
- point out the author
- point out the illustrator
- read the dedication, if any
- look at the cover illustration and predict what will happen in the story
- look at the story pictures before you read and predict what will happen in the story
- use expression!
- let your child take the lead sometimes by letting them comment or ask questions as you read

## Activities to Extend Your Child's Reading

### Create a New Story

Talk about the characters in the story. Describe them, using character traits such as silly, kind, foolish, curious, or patient.

Make up a new story about the character by imagining what they might do next. For example, after reading Goldilocks and the Three Bears, tell what Goldilocks might do when she visits a zoo and sees the bears there. What will happen when she goes home and tells her parents, or goes to school and tells her classmates what happened to her? What will the bears do to repair their damages and protect themselves from future intruders?



### **Change One Element**

The main elements of a story are the **characters, setting, problem and solution**. Try changing one of these to create a new story. For example, after reading Little Red Riding Hood, change the wolf to a pig or an eagle. How would the story be different? Change the story so Grandma lives in an apartment building instead of the woods. Could the problem be Little Red Riding Hood gets lost instead of the wolf trying to eat her?

### **Rereading**

Many times a child will decide that a particular story is their absolute favorite, and ask you to "read it again." Our advice is to do exactly what they asked, even if it means you both know the words by heart. This can be tedious for the parent, but the benefits to the child can be immeasurable. Often, they will begin to notice particular words, or letters, and come to know them well. What an easy way to increase a child's vocabulary! They also develop a love for a good story, and this increases their willingness to read on their own later in life.



### **Put Yourself in the Story**

Connect the story to personal knowledge. Your child is able to make connections to the stories that you read to them because of their life experiences. You can help them connect the storyline to real life events or people with the use of questions like these:

- Did something like this ever happen to you?
- Do any of the characters remind you of anyone you know?

If your child can't respond, you can make connections yourself with statements like these:

- That character reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- This \_\_\_\_\_ is like ours because....

### **Make a Tape**

Children love to listen to books on tape. An economical way to personalize this experience is to make the tapes yourself. While reading some of your child's favorite books to them, record yourself. Encourage other members of the family and relatives living far away to record stories on audiocassettes and mail them to your child. This can be done while looking at the accompanying book or listening to the tape alone

### **Ask Questions**

Good readers ask questions while they read. Model your own questions for your child, and they will soon do the same. Some ways to share your questions might be:

- I wonder why.....
- What if.....
- What do you think will happen next?
- Why do you think....

## Family LINK

### Writing With Your Kids

- Correctly spells most high frequency words used in sentences
- Uses logical phonetic spelling (including logical choices of vowels) in most syllables
- Accurately capitalizes first word in sentence, pronoun "I", proper nouns
- Accurately uses periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas in a series
- Writes a paragraph on a topic or theme

### How Can Reading Aloud Lead to Writing?

Many stories can provide a child with writing ideas. Here are some you might try with your child.

### **Continue the Story**

After reading a story, ask your child to imagine that the book has just a few more pages. What would be written on those pages? What might happen next? For example, after reading Can't You Sleep, Little Bear? you might ask what might happen if Little Bear wakes up in the middle of the night. What would Big Bear do now?

### **Character Adventures**

Draw or photocopy a favorite story character, like Clifford the Big Red Dog, or Peter Rabbit. Give your child a large sheet of paper, the character, some glue and writing tools. Have them paste the character down, and draw a scene that creates a new adventure for the character, or retells the original story. The youngest child can tell the story from their drawing, and older children can label parts of their picture, or write a few sentences about the action in the picture.

### **Wordless Books**

Some books have no words. The story is told in the pictures. After "reading" one of these books, such as Tuesday, your child can write or dictate the words for each page of the story.

### **Letter Writing**

Sometimes after reading a story, you might have some questions or comments about the story characters or events. Put them in a letter to the main character. Pretend to mail it. You might even write a return letter to surprise them!

### **Information Books**

Children love nonfiction books, and quickly remember facts about favorite topics, like dinosaurs, whales or volcanoes. Give your child several sheets of paper stapled together to form a book. They can draw pictures about the facts they've learned, and write a sentence to go with each, creating their own information book.

### **Patterned Writing**

Many stories have repetitive language. After reading, for example, The Important Book, children can easily repeat the sentence pattern that occurs throughout the book. They can follow this pattern to write their own sentences.

### **Writing Tools**

To create excitement about the prospect of writing, have on hand a variety of papers and writing utensils. Computer paper with holiday designs, lined and unlined paper, colored paper, adding machine tapes, and poster board are just a few ideas of the kinds of paper children love to write on. Pencils are fine, but markers, crayons, gel pens, colored pencils, chalk and even paint brushes can make writing a lot more fun.

No literate home is complete with a dictionary and thesaurus. These two reference books are fundamental resources. There are many colorful, attractive children's dictionaries available in bookstores.

### **The Ultimate Question: What Can We Write About?**

The list is truly endless, but here's a sample:

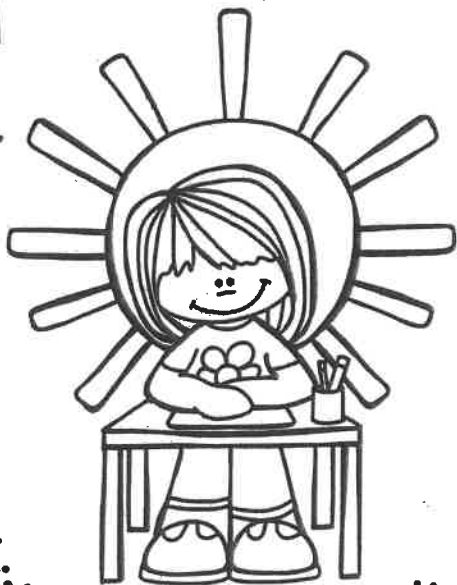
- Shopping lists
- People to invite lists
  
- Things to take on vacation lists
- Birthday cards
- Holiday cards
- Thank you cards
- Letters
- Signs
- Labels
- Postcards
- Stories about yourself and family members

- Stories about imaginary characters
- Stories about magazine pictures
- Stories about objects
- Stories about stuffed animals or toys
- Stories about stickers
- Forms for magazine subscriptions
- Forms to join a club
- Calendars to keep track of appointments
- Address books
- Itineraries
- Journals
- Diaries
- Complaints
- ABC books
- Captions for your photo albums
- Etc., etc., etc....

## Going beyond "How was your day?"

Questions to ask your child after school to get a conversation started.

1. What was the best thing that happened at school today?
2. What was the worst thing that happened at school today?
3. What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
4. Tell me something that made you laugh today.
5. Tell me about what you read in class today. What did your teacher read to you today?
6. If you could choose, who would you like to sit by in class? Who would you not want to sit by in class? Why?
7. What's the biggest difference between this year and last year?
8. Who did you sit by at lunch today? What did you talk about?
9. Can you show me something you learned today?
10. What part of school is your favorite?
11. Tell me the name of 3 kids you sat next to today.
12. What was the most interesting/funny thing your teacher said today?
13. What class rules does your teacher say are important?
14. Tell me one interesting fact about your teacher.
15. What's your favorite time of day at school?
16. What are you looking forward to at school tomorrow?
17. Did you get frustrated with anything at school today?
18. Were you able to finish all of your work today?
19. Tell me about a new word you heard today at school.
20. If I called your teacher tonight what would she/he tell me about you?



# We Pledge to Read

We promise to read  
Each day and each night.  
We know it's the key  
To growing up right.



We'll read to ourselves,  
We'll read to a crowd.  
It makes no difference  
If silent or loud.



We'll read at our desks,  
At home and at school,  
On a bean bag or bed,  
By the fire or pool.



Each book that we read  
Puts smarts in our heads,  
'Cause brains grow more thoughts  
The more they are fed.

So we take this oath  
To make reading our way  
Of feeding our brains  
What they need every day.

Written by Debra Angstead, Missouri-NEA

