

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Vancouver Public Schools
Connecting Families and Schools

Take advantage of everything your local library has to offer

The library isn't just a place to find new books to read with your child. Libraries offer a wealth of information, programs and other helpful services. Here are just a few things you can find at the library:

- **Read-aloud and book club programs.** Some of these are led by children. There may also be presentations by authors that your child enjoys.
- **Reference materials.** Help familiarize your child with dictionaries, almanacs, atlases and encyclopedias. They'll come in handy as she needs to complete assignments throughout her school career.
- **More than just books.** From magazines to audiobooks to movies, there is a lot more than just books at the library. See what you and your child can find on your next visit!



Source: U.S. Department of Education, "Beyond Books: Library Services for Children," Reading Rockets, niswc.com/library_elem_tips.

*"I continue to do what I did as a child;
dream of books, make books and collect books."*

—Maurice Sendak

Boost thinking skills by discussing books

When your child finishes a book, use it as an opportunity for him to share what he's learned. Do something simple and natural: Have a conversation. You can:

- **Discuss the book with your child.** Ask him what he thought of the characters, plot and ending. Consider reading the book yourself to make the talk more lively.
- **Have a family discussion.** Suggest that everyone in your family read the book. Gather one evening to share your views. Did anyone have the same favorite part?
- **Start a book club.** Encourage your child to read the same book as some of his friends. Then, host a book club meeting. They can meet at your home to discuss what they have read.

Keep track of your child's reading progress

The older your child gets, the more he'll read to himself. That can make assessing reading skills tough. When you're keeping tabs on your child's reading progress, check that he:



- **Reads books at his own** reading level independently.
- **Enjoys reading** by himself.
- **Can understand and analyze** the information that he reads on his own.
- **Uses reading as a way** to learn new information.

Share your passion for reading

Enthusiasm for reading goes a long way. Are you thrilled about a book you're reading? Tell your child! Help her find reading materials she'll love, too. If she sees reading is an exciting activity, she's more likely to do it.



Teach sight words through touch

Sight words are words that kids will see over and over—so often that they need to recognize them at first "sight," words such as *about* and *because*. Knowing them makes reading much easier.



Have your child write a few sight words in glue and then cover them with glitter, sand or yarn. When the words dry, your child can trace them with his finger as he reads.

Make connections and build vocabulary by using word webs

Creating word webs is a visual way for your child to connect concepts, questions and words and it helps her build her vocabulary. Word webs can also provide a framework for writing.

To create a word web, have your child write a word in the middle of a blank sheet of paper (*gardens*, for example). Ask your child to write other words all around the page that relate to the main concept (*vegetables*, *grow*, *plants*) and draw lines that connect the new words to the center word. Your child can also think of words that relate to some of her other words. For example, she might write *tomatoes* as a branch off the word *vegetables*.



Source: "Vocabulary Strategy 8: Create Word Webs," Reading Horizons, niswc.com/connect_word_webs.

Emphasize an understanding of math words

Your child has a math test coming up, and he knows all his facts. But how are his reading skills? Reading is a part of every school subject, especially when it comes to taking tests. Your child will need to read directions and solve test problems.

Have your child:

- **Look over homework** and past tests. Notice which words appear often, whether they're math terms or in directions. Practice reading them with your child. Make sure he understands what they mean.
- **Solve new problems.** Help your child figure out how to apply his knowledge correctly. For example, is he comfortable with words such as *fewer* and *product*?



Q: How can I make sure that my child is comprehending everything that she reads?

A: Talk with your child about what she reads. Discuss all kinds of things, such as characters, plot and word definitions. Link reading to her life. Does she relate to characters or situations? What would she have done if she were the character?

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

Find opportunities to read on the go

Your child can practice reading anywhere—even in the car or on the bus. When you and your child are out, encourage him to:



- **Read road signs** and billboards.
- **Find words on license plates** and bumper stickers.
- **Read the directions** to unfamiliar locations.

For lower elementary readers:

- ***Just Joking: 300 Hilarious Jokes, Tongue Twisters, and Ridiculous Riddles*** by National Geographic Kids (National Geographic Children's Books). Get silly with these jokes, all related to science!



- ***Prince and Pirate*** by Charlotte Gunnufson (G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers). Two fish that are used to being on their own are put into the same fish tank, so they must find a way to get along.

For upper elementary readers:

- ***Little Cat's Luck*** by Marion Dane Bauer (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers). Patches is in search of her own special place when she follows a fluttering leaf and is off on an adventure.
- ***The Key to Extraordinary*** by Natalie Lloyd (Scholastic Press). Every woman in Emma's family lives an extraordinary life, revealed to them in a dream. So, Emma eagerly waits for her own dream.

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Publisher: L. Andrew McLaughlin.
 Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.
 Editor: Stacey Marin.

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 (a division of PaperClip Media, Inc.)
 P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
 1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3302
www.parent-institute.com