

BUILDING READERS®

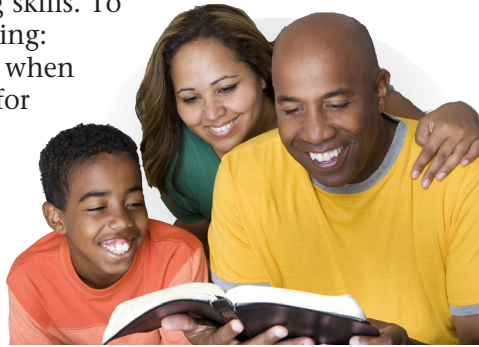
How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Vancouver Public Schools
Connecting Families and Schools

Reading for pleasure can improve your child's language and literacy skills

When your child enjoys reading and does it often, he boosts his vocabulary and reading skills. To increase his interest in reading:

- **Suggest books you enjoyed** when you were young. Search for some of your favorite authors or books at the library with your child.
- **Make opportunities for your child** to read with friends. Encourage them to discuss books they enjoy. They may consider starting a book club.
- **Keep a supply of books** and magazines on subjects that interest your child available all around your home.
- **Connect books and food.** Create a reading café at home. Bake a favorite dessert and make some hot chocolate. Then, settle in with your child and spend some time reading.



Source: "Leisure Reading," International Reading Association, niswc.com/leisure_reading_benefits.

"Reading is like an infectious disease: it is caught not taught."

—Christine Nuttall

Work with the teacher to set reading goals

It is important to be on the same page as your child's teacher when it comes to reading. Work together to set appropriate goals for your child. You can talk to the teacher about your child's:

- **Reading level.** Is your child meeting expectations for her grade? What kinds of materials are best for her? How can you tell if a book is the right level? How can you help her improve?
- **Reading habits.** Many teachers expect students to read for a certain number of minutes each day. Should your child keep and turn in a calendar to track the time she spends reading? What other ideas does the teacher have to instill good reading habits?

Encourage frequent writing

Reading and writing go hand in hand, so it's important to encourage your child to write. When your child is writing, make sure you:



- **Wait until she has tried** to fix the errors in her writing before you offer to help.
- **Encourage her to share** what she has written with other family members.
- **Save what she has written** and find ways to display her work.

Source: "Second and Third Graders Writing Milestones," PBSkids, niswc.com/encourage_writing.

Mnemonic devices help spell tricky words

A *mnemonic* ("neh-mon-ic") *device* is a tool used to remember information.



Mnemonics can help your child with spelling words. For example, he could make up a sentence like *Big Elephants Could Always Use Some Exercise* to help him remember how to spell the word *because*.

Explore nonfiction with your child

To achieve in school, your child will have to be able to read, understand and enjoy many types of books, including nonfiction.



Reading nonfiction helps your child:

- **Apply comprehension skills** to factual content.
- **Develop new hobbies** or interests.
- **Learn how authors** use text to inform and persuade their readers.

Source: M. Lee, "Enthralling Nonfiction for Early Readers," education.com, niswc.com/reading_nonfiction_books.

A personal dictionary can help grow your child's vocabulary

Your child is constantly seeing and hearing new words every day. How will he ever be able to remember them all? Help him make his own special dictionary for all the new words he learns. The more words that he knows, the more he will understand as he reads more complex information.



Encourage your child to write new words or words he's not sure about in a small notebook. Or, he can make his own book by stapling several pieces of paper together.

Writing just the word is okay for now. Your child should focus on finishing the sentence or paragraph he is reading. Later, he can look up the new word and add the definition. He can also draw pictures to illustrate the definition. Make sure your child reviews his dictionary regularly—and his vocabulary is sure to grow!

Persevere through reading challenges

Reading is part of many home and school activities, so if your child struggles with it, it can feel as if it affects every part of her life. Her self-esteem can suffer.

To support your child:

- **Consult her teacher.** Ask about realistic expectations. What does your child's teacher notice in class? What strategies have been taught and how can you apply them at home? What additional help is available?
- **Use reading materials at home** that minimize frustration. Choose books that are easy for your child to read and understand. This builds her confidence while she is reading.
- **Stay positive about her learning.** Focus on how her strengths can help. And remember to praise your child often for her hard work.

Source: "Helping Children Overcome Reading Difficulties," Child Development Institute, niswc.com/helping_reading_difficulties.



Q: Our family is so busy. How can we make time for reading together?

A: Think about the times when everyone is home. Put family reading on the schedule then, even if it's just once a week. Perhaps you could schedule a reading dinner or a surprise "DEAR" (Drop Everything and Read) time during Saturday chores. Make reading a fun part of established family routines.

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

Ask your child to tell you a story for a change

Next time your child asks you to tell him a story, trade places. Let him make up a story of his own, and when he finishes, suggest he write it down. Encourage him to leave spaces for illustrations! Now he'll have a copy of his own authored tale.



For lower elementary readers:

- *I, Fly: The Buzz About Flies and How Awesome They Are* by Bridget Heos (Henry Holt and Company). Learn fun facts about flies, such as how their wings work to make a buzzing noise.



- *The President and Mom's Apple Pie* by Michael Garland (Dutton Children's Books). When President William Taft goes to a small town to dedicate a flagpole, he is entranced by all of the aromas he smells.

For upper elementary readers:

- *Ava Tree and the Wishes Three* by Jeanne Betancourt (Feiweil and Friends). Ava's birthday is the first day of summer vacation. On it, she finds that she has a special ability to make birthday wishes.
- *Jake the Fake Keeps It Real* by Craig Robinson and Adam Mansbach (Crown Books for Young Readers). Jake is enrolling in the Music and Art Academy with a big secret—he is neither a musician nor an artist.

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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