

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Vancouver Public Schools
Connecting Families and Schools

Be your child's reading buddy to boost fluency and comprehension

Some children struggle to sound out every word as they read, which can make it hard for them to understand what they are reading. Helping your child read more fluently can boost his comprehension and make reading more fun for him.

To improve fluency and build comprehension:

- 1. Look for a short passage** that your child would find interesting. Make sure it is at his reading level.
- 2. Read the passage aloud** while he listens and follows along.
- 3. Have your child read** the passage aloud. If he has trouble reading it, read it to him again. Then have him read it after you.
- 4. Ask each other questions** about what you read. What was the main idea of the passage? Discuss your favorite characters or the most entertaining part. Thinking and talking about the reading will increase your child's comprehension.



Give your child tools to assist with reading for a research project

When children are assigned research projects, they have to do lots of reading for information. To make this type of reading productive:

- **Look at the research together.** Visit the library and help your child find books about her topic. Practice using tables of contents, section headings and indexes.
- **Supervise online research** and review how to use sources. Remind your child that it's not OK to "cut and paste" words into a project. She should quote directly (with credit to the author), or put things in her own words and cite her sources.
- **Provide supplies** such as sticky notes to mark pages and index cards to jot down key information she finds.

Cookbooks further love of reading

Story time and snack time go together like macaroni and cheese. Check out these children's cookbooks based on favorite childhood tales:



- **Green Eggs and Ham Cookbook** by Georgeanne Brennan.
- **Roald Dahl's Even More Revolting Recipes** by Roald Dahl.
- **The Little House Cookbook** by Barbara M. Walker.
- **The Disney Princess Cookbook** by Disney Book Group.

Share a story and a story-inspired snack with your child!

Make the most of library trips

Visit the local library regularly with your child to:

- **Check out** new items and old favorites.
- **Attend** children's activities like story hours or plays.
- **Play** educational computer games.
- **Build** your child's comfort there.



Ask reading-focused questions

When you meet with your child's teacher for parent-teacher conferences, ask about your child's reading progress. Here are a few questions to ask:



- **What is my child's** reading level? What progress have you seen?
- **How would you describe** my child's reading?
- **My child likes reading** _____. Do you have suggestions for other books she'll like?

Show your child that reading is important

Children who see their parents reading usually grow up to be readers themselves. To demonstrate the value of reading:

- **Let your child see you reading every day.** Pick up a newspaper, magazine or a book. He will see that reading is important to you, and he may want to read, too.
- **Get your own library card and use it.** When you take your child to the library, find something to check out for yourself.
- **Tell him why you're reading**—for information, to check out a news story you heard about or to just relax.
- **Read things to him.** When you see an article you think your child might find interesting, read a small part of it to him. He may be motivated to finish reading it himself.
- **Join him.** When you see your child reading, pick up something to read yourself and join him. Bring a snack to share.
- **Give books as gifts.** Show your child that books are a way to give people pleasure.



Pumpkins inspire reading and word play

Now that it's October, pumpkins are everywhere! Why not make a pumpkin the center of your family reading with books like *The Biggest Pumpkin Ever* by Steven Kroll or *It's Pumpkin Time* by Zoe Hall?

Then, boost language skills by playing these pumpkin-related word games:

1. **Look at a pumpkin.** Who can make the longest list of words or phrases that describe it? (*round, lumpy, orange, future pie*, etc.)
2. **Write the word *pumpkin*** on a large sheet of paper. How many smaller words can each person make from the letters in it? (*pump, pin, pink*, etc.)



Q: My elementary schooler says he doesn't like to read. What can I do?

A: In the early grades, children are still learning how to read. This is harder for some children than others, and they can become frustrated. Rather than pushing your child to practice reading, show him that reading can be fun. Provide books and magazines about your child's interests. And set an example by reading yourself!

Beat boredom with novel activities

Your child is bored—but says she doesn't want to read. Try these book-based boredom busters. Suggest that your child:



- **Name a topic** for you to research. Then find cool facts she won't be able to resist reading more about.
- **Dictate a story.** While she talks, you write. Then have her read her creation aloud to the family.

For lower elementary readers:

- ***The Promise*** by Nicola Davies. A young girl makes a promise to an old woman—to plant a sack of acorns. As she plants them around the city, the girl's entire world changes.

- ***Rubia and the Three Osos*** by Susan Middleton Elya. This take on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* includes Spanish vocabulary—and has a surprising twist at the end!



For upper elementary readers:

- ***Grandma Chickenlegs*** by Geraldine McCaughrean. When Tatia's step-mother sends her to get a needle from Grandma Chickenlegs, the evil woman traps the girl in her cottage.
- ***The Big Bad Wolf Goes on Vacation*** by Delphine Perret. Louis is best friends with the Big Bad Wolf. Find out what happens when the Big Bad Wolf accompanies him to the beach!

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