

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Vancouver Public Schools
Connecting Families and Schools

Celebrate 2018 with literacy resolutions!

Ring in the New Year by helping your child make resolutions that will strengthen her reading skills. Suggest that she resolve to:

- **Read more.** Your child could aim to read one book each week or each month. If she is already an avid reader, suggest she try reading a new genre each month.
- **Write more.** Ask your child to set aside time each day for some writing. She could write a poem, a letter, an entry in her journal—or anything else! If she has writer's block, show her a picture and ask her to write about it.
- **Learn more.** Challenge your child to learn (and use) one new word a day. She doesn't need a fancy "word of the day" calendar; a dictionary will do. By the end of the year, she'll have 365 new words under her belt.



"Children should learn that reading is pleasure, not just something that teachers make you do in school."

—Beverly Cleary

Teach your child to attack tough words

What should your child do when he sees a challenging word? Attack it! *Word-attack strategies* help readers figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Encourage your child to:

- **Notice pictures.** Photographs and illustrations can give him clues about unfamiliar words.
- **Identify chunks.** Have him look for familiar sounds—or "chunks"—within words, such as "call" and "ing" in *calling*.
- **Keep reading.** He should try reading the sentence again. Or read the next sentence for more information.
- **Make connections.** If the unfamiliar word reminds your child of another word, the two words may be related.

Source: "Reading and Word-Attack Strategies," Reading A-Z, nswc.com/br-es-wordattack.

Include reading in your child's daily schedule

Teachers expect their students to read at home every day. To help your child take responsibility for this, make it part of his daily routine. He might read during homework time, for example, or in bed each night. Whatever time he chooses, make sure he's consistent. Keep interesting materials handy to build excitement. Enjoy a book yourself, too. Show your child that reading is a family priority.



Check out children's magazines

Next time you're at the library, browse the magazine section with your child. Look for age-appropriate magazines, such as *Time for Kids*, *Highlights* or *National Geographic Kids*. Your child will learn more about a variety of topics—while building her reading skills at the same time.



Reading aloud has endless benefits

There are so many reasons to read aloud to your child—even if he can already read beautifully! Reading aloud:

- **Reminds** your child how pleasant reading can be.
- **Improves** vocabulary and listening skills.
- **Helps** your child enjoy new literature.
- **Gives** you and your child chances to discuss stories and how they relate to real life.

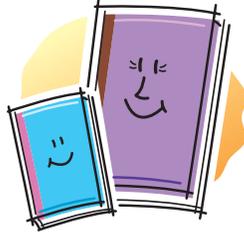


Source: "How to Read Aloud," Education World, nswc.com/br-es-aloud.

Have fun with synonyms and antonyms

As your child's vocabulary grows, she'll learn more about *synonyms* (words with the same meaning) and *antonyms* (words with opposite meanings). Challenge your child with this game that reviews them. All you need is one sheet of paper per player, some pencils and your brains!

- 1. Together, pick a word** that you both know that has several synonyms and antonyms (such as *good*).
- 2. Write down as many synonyms** for the word as you can think of in a minute (*great, wonderful, marvelous*).
- 3. Flip your paper over.** Write as many antonyms as you can think of in a minute (*bad, terrible, horrible*).
- 4. Whoever has the most words** written down wins and gets to pick the next word!



Focus on fluency

To increase your child's reading *fluency*, or the ease with which he reads:



- **Encourage him to reread** books out loud so words become more familiar.
- **Don't correct incorrect words** right away. Ask if the word made sense when he read it in the passage. Then look at it again together.
- **Read advanced books** together. Just hearing more difficult vocabulary will help your child build fluency.

Use daily errands to build vocabulary

Talk about what you see when you're out doing errands with your child. Ask him questions about what he sees. The more he talks about his surroundings, the more his vocabulary will grow! When you're:

- **Traveling from place to place**, talk about transportation. Point out things such as a *bus stop* and a *traffic circle*. Can your child name the traffic signs he spots?
- **At a bank**, talk about *safety deposit boxes* and *bank tellers*. What words does your child see on signs around the bank?
- **At the grocery store**, ask your child to look for a specific fruit. Can he spot a *cantaloupe* or a *pomegranate*? Later, look up where these foods are grown.



For lower elementary readers:

- *Ada Twist, Scientist* by Andrea Beaty (Harry N. Abrams). Ada is a natural born scientist who likes to question everything. Find out what she discovers when she investigates an unpleasant smell.
- *A Piece of Home* by Jeri Watts (Candlewick). Hee Jun has a hard time adjusting when his family moves from Korea to America. Will he ever feel like he fits in?



For upper elementary readers:

- *The Littlest Bigfoot* by Jennifer Weiner (Aladdin). When twelve-year-old Alice Mayfair arrives at a new boarding school, she makes an unusual friend named Millie. Will Alice be able to keep Millie's secret? She will have to if they are going to survive!



Q: My fourth grader says she hates reading. I bring home books on the things she used to love reading about, but she says they're boring. What can I do?

A: As children get older, their interests change. Your daughter may have loved horses in second grade, but now she may see them as "little kid stuff."

Think about the topics your child talks about now and look for reading material on those topics. Share them with your child, but don't force her to read them.

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

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