

Dear parents,

Reading together builds children’s vocabulary and provides practice of literacy skills. This is especially important when children are not in school because reading skills can be lost if not practiced. In fact, research shows that students, who do not have access to literacy-rich environments over the summer, lose around two months of reading achievement. This means that they start the next grade where they were in April of the year before. The good news is that access to books is key to preventing this slide.

As a parent, you can help your child’s reading by helping your child access books and literacy resources available free online. And most importantly, don’t stress out about what they are reading or reading every word perfectly. Right now, just focus on enjoying literacy as part of your day, every day. It matters.

Read Together, Read Forever

Reading Tips for Parents

Here are some ideas based on age to encourage a love of reading while building literacy skills.

Infant

1. Read the words on the page to your child. The author may choose different words than you use on a daily basis. This increases vocabulary.
2. Allow your child to turn the pages in board books. Point to each page as you go through the book. Reading from front to back and left to right is a basic literacy skill.
3. Touch and feel books allow your infant to interact with the text.

Preschool

1. All of the above plus
2. Provide different types of texts: magazines, eBooks, picture books, etc.
3. If your child won’t sit still, that’s ok. Read to them while they play.
4. Act out the stories you read. This allows you to see if your child is comprehending the stories in a fun way.

Elementary

1. All of the above plus
2. Take turns reading pages.
3. Read a chapter book aloud to your child that is above the level that he could read by himself. This makes a great bedtime routine.
4. For fiction, ask your child questions about the story and pictures as you read. Have your child retell the story when you finish.
5. For nonfiction, have your child tell you 1 fact that she learned from the book.
6. Talk about the parts of a text: the cover, the title, the author's name, the spine, pictures, the photo caption, charts, the headings, the subheadings, boldface words, hyperlinked words, the glossary, etc.
7. Write a story together. You can write the words and your child can draw the pictures. Then read it together.
8. It's ok to reread books. In fact, it's good for fluency, so go ahead and reread that old favorite.
9. And most importantly, don't worry about your child reading every word perfectly or skipping pages. Focus on whether or not your child can understand what she is reading. If she can, just keep going.

Middle and High School

1. Provide different types of texts: age-appropriate magazines, local newspaper, biographies, young adult novels, classic literature, poetry, audio books, comics, and especially text about your child's interests. There is a book for everyone; you just have to find it.
2. Model reading for your children. Let them see you reading. Let them hear you thinking about what you read. You can even read what your child is reading and talk about it together.
3. Encourage your child to keep a journal.
4. Mute those streaming services and read the closed captioning instead.
5. If possible, ask your child's teacher what reading strategies they had been working on in class, so that you can reinforce these at home too.
6. As with elementary children, It's ok to reread books. In fact, it's good for fluency, so go ahead and reread that old favorite.

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