

Building Readers[®]

Eisenhower Elementary
Norman, Oklahoma

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers



Writing, reading link grows stronger

As your child grows, he will use writing more often to understand reading. For example, he might write a report after reading a book. Expect him to:

- **Write about reading assignments** in order to think more deeply about them.
- **Be able to focus** on forming ideas rather than simply forming letters.
- **Revise and edit work** so it makes sense and includes descriptive words.
- **Continue to need help** with spelling and grammar.
- **Benefit from your support.** Give compliments and display his work proudly!

Source: "Writing Milestones," PBS Parents, www.pbs.org/parents/reading/language/second/writing_milestone_second.html.



Tip If your child watches too much TV, his reading skills may suffer. How much is too much? Try not to exceed ten hours per week. Connect TV to reading, too. Find books about your child's favorite show.

Source: "Guiding Your Child's TV Viewing," Education Place, www.eduplace.com/parents/rdg/e_tv.html.

Q: Is it okay for my child to read assignments and play CDs at the same time?

A: Some kids want total silence during study time. Others insist on playing music. Research doesn't provide clear guidance on this topic. If your child is doing well in school, playing music may not hurt. It may even be good for her to learn "multitasking"—a real-world skill.

Source: Ruth A. Peters, Ph.D., "For kids studying, silence may not be golden," MSNBC, www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8344769/.

Questions
& Answers



Boys, girls may benefit from different books

Research shows that boys and girls may develop reading skills differently. Girls build language skills earlier and enjoy emotion-based books. Boys, on the other hand, prefer less "mushy" stories. No matter what, find books that match your child's interests. Make reading fun.

Source: Karen Gutiérrez, "Get a guy to read? Try making it gross," *The Enquirer*, <http://news.enquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050526/NEWS0103/505260375/>.

Read books repeatedly

When your child brings home a book, have him read it more than once. Doing this builds fluency—the ability to read with ease. Your child will improve his skills—and his confidence, too!

Source: Marcia Grek, Ph.D., Carol Robinson, Ph.D., Mary Van Sciver, M.S. and Michelle Wahl, M.S., "Some Simple Ways to Help Your Elementary Child Learn to Read," Florida Center for Reading Research, www.fcrr.org/ForParents/forparents.htm.



Following instructions requires reading

Homework isn't always a "reading assignment." But it often involves reading directions. Ask your child to tell you what she's supposed to do in her own words. Do this at the beginning of the assignment rather than at the end. She may have to reread, but she won't have to redo her work.

Source: Nancy Paulu, "Helping Your Child With Homework," KidSource OnLine, www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/homework.html.

Are you making reading interactive?

When your child reads by herself, she can still benefit from talking about the book with you. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're encouraging this:

- ___ **1. Do you read** the same materials as your child so you can discuss them?
- ___ **2. Do you ask** about what your child is reading?
- ___ **3. Do you encourage** your child to join book clubs?
- ___ **4. Do you bring** your child to reading-related events at the library?



How did you do?

Each *yes* answer shows you're encouraging your child to communicate about reading. For each *no* answer, find ways to change your answer to *yes*.

Writing fables can be fun



Many children's books are fables—they teach moral lessons. Children learn many moral lessons in real life. Encourage your child to put one in writing. He should:

- **Address a difficult issue**, such as greed, laziness or dishonesty.

- **Write two or three** paragraphs about the experience.
- **Use plenty of detail** when telling the story.
- **Include illustrations** if he'd like.
- **Make sure** there is a moral.
- **Read and discuss** the story with you. What can people learn from it?

Source: Susan K. Perry, *Playing Smart*, ISBN: 1-57542-095-3 (Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 1-866-703-7322, www.freespirit.com).

Get to the root of reading problems

When your child struggles with reading, what gives him the most trouble? Is he working so hard to pronounce words that he misses meaning? Or is he so focused on meaning that he misstates words?

- **To boost reading for meaning**, say things like, "Hmmm. Does that make sense?" and "Let's look at the picture for clues." Rereading also helps, along with practicing sight words.
- **To emphasize phonics skills**, suggest that your child read words again. If needed, ask helpful questions. "What do you think the character is doing on this page?" Practice making letter sounds together.



Source: Linda K. Rath, Ed.D., and Louise Kennedy, *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, ISBN: 0-06-051027-7 (HarperResource, www.harpercollins.com).



How Much is a Million? by David M. Schwartz (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard). Large

numbers such as million, billion and trillion sound impressive. But what do they really mean? Kids find out in this easy-to-understand book.

You Read to Me, I'll Read to You, by Mary Ann Hoberman (Little, Brown and Company). This creative book is made for parents and kids to read together. The lines of its fairy tales are printed in alternating colors, so it's easy to take turns.

Make a game with spelling words



Looking for a new way to review spelling words? Try making a crossword puzzle. Your child may need help with this. But she'll learn in the process—and have fun, too.

Source: "Create a crossword puzzle," Crayola.com, www.crayola.com/search/results.cfm?keywords=crossword.

Resource for families

Learn words that explain emotions. Many families learn "words of the day." Here's a site that provides a list of emotional words: www.micheleborba.com/Pages/ArtBMIO9.html. Each word helps kids explain emotions. Look them up and discuss them. Use them throughout the day. They'll probably come in handy!

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