

# Building Readers<sup>®</sup>



Eisenhower Elementary  
Norman, Oklahoma

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

## Help your child relax about reading

Learning to read—and maintaining reading skills—can be a challenge. So it's important to remind your child that reading is fun. Start by encouraging "pleasure reading" at home. Find books and magazines that:

- **Explore** your child's interests.
- **Satisfy** his curiosity.
- **Use** skills he has mastered.

Help him relax while he reads (instead of feeling like he's "working"). Show him that you love reading, too. Schedule a family reading time, such as half an hour before bedtime. If your child complains, look for different reading materials together. Ask a librarian for help.

**Source:** Beverly Swanson, "How Can I Improve My Child's Reading?" KidSource OnLine, [www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/improve.reading.html](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/improve.reading.html).



## Boost fluency by reading together



It's exciting when children move beyond recognizing individual words to reading whole sections easily. Here's a low-stress way to build this skill. Read a passage to your child, speaking clearly with feeling. Then have her read it back to you. Being familiar with it may relax her. You can still work together on trouble spots.

**Source:** Jim Wright, *Kids as Reading Helpers: A Peer Tutor Training Manual* (Intervention Central, [www.interventioncentral.org](http://www.interventioncentral.org), 315/635-4570).

## Using Resources

Your child wants to go online, but you don't want him to play mindless games. The American Library Association has some reading suggestions. Go to "Great Web Sites for Kids" at [www.ala.org/greatsites](http://www.ala.org/greatsites). See what reading adventures you find!

**Source:** "Great Web Sites for Kids," American Library Association, [www.ala.org/greatsites](http://www.ala.org/greatsites).

## Frequently used words should be familiar

Some words are used so often that kids must recognize them right away. This makes reading much easier. Familiarize your child with color words (*blue, white, yellow, etc.*) and common words, such as *the, was, look, said* and *please*.



**Source:** "Dolch's List of Basic Sight Words," Literacy Connections, [www.literacyconnections.com/Dolch1.html](http://www.literacyconnections.com/Dolch1.html).

### Tip

Your child is not too old to listen to stories. While you read aloud, she gets to imagine, learn and simply enjoy words. Try having a lively talk about the book. This extends the fun and boosts comprehension.

**Source:** Cathy Puett Miller, "Engaged Reading: Turning Reading into An Active Experience," Education World, [www.education-world.com/a\\_curr/reading/ReadingCoach/ReadingCoach007.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/reading/ReadingCoach/ReadingCoach007.shtml).



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

**A:** Think about the times when everyone is home. Dinnertime? Weekends? Then put family reading on the schedule, even if it's just once a week. Perhaps you could schedule a "reading dinner" (when books are allowed at the table) or a surprise "DEAR" (Drop Everything and Read) time during Saturday chores. Make reading a fun part of established family routines.

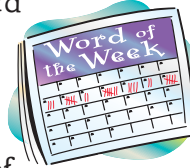


Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Games entertain while teaching words

When your child has to learn words—whether they're from a school list or words you simply want him to know—there are fun ways to teach them. For example, play:

- **“Word of the week.”** Take turns choosing a word from the dictionary. Use it often. Keep track of how many times it's said during the week. Can you set a weekly record? Post “learned words” to remind yourselves of them.
- **“Word origins.”** Find a book about the origins of common words. For instance, *salary* comes from *salarium*, the Latin word for *salt*. That's because Roman soldiers were paid in salt. Name some words and possible origins. Who can guess the correct origin?



**Source:** “Helping Your Child at Home with Vocabulary Building,” Child Development Institute, [www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/vocabulary.shtml](http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/vocabulary.shtml).

## Interesting discussions build comprehension

To help your child get the most out of books, talk about them before, during and after she reads. Discuss a book's:



- **Title and jacket description.** Where does the story take place? Is there a conflict in it? What does your child think will happen? Why?

- **Characters and plot.** What are the main characters like? Does your child agree with their decisions? What might happen next?
- **Conclusion.** Did the story end the way your child expected? What other endings can she imagine? What did she get out of the story?

**Source:** “Appropriate Reading Discussions for Children,” Math and Reading Help, [http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/articles/Appropriate\\_reading\\_discussions\\_for\\_children.html](http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/articles/Appropriate_reading_discussions_for_children.html).

### For Lower Elementary readers:



***Cinderella at the Ball***, by Margaret Hillert (Modern Curriculum Press). Young students can read the entire Cinderella story them-

selves, from the ball announcement to the happy ending. A helpful word list is provided.

***The Eye Book***, by Theo LeSieg (Random House). A boy and a bunny see sensible and silly things. The text includes plenty of sight words, plus a few challenges (such as *hooray* and *knife*).

### For Upper Elementary readers:

***Stanley and the Magic Lamp***, by Jeff Brown (HarperTrophy). A genie grants Stanley's every wish ... and a few others, too. The results are fascinating, but not what the Lambchop family expected.

***The Ninth Nugget***, by Ron Roy (Random House). Nothing is more exciting than finding a gold nugget—except solving the mystery when it's stolen. As usual, Dink, Josh and Ruth Rose use teamwork and wits to save the day in this popular children's series.

## Reading term of the month

### Phoneme

A **phoneme** is a tiny unit of speech, such as the *c* in *cat*.

## Avoid big motivation mistakes

If reading is difficult for your child, you probably try reading together often. To encourage—not discourage—him, make sure you're:



- **Patient.** When he hits a difficult word, resist jumping in. Give him time to figure it out.
- **Kind.** If he can't read a word, don't say, “That's wrong.” Suggest that you read it together.
- **Supportive.** Choose easy-to-read books that help your child feel successful. Give genuine compliments.
- **Encouraging.** Look for books that will fascinate your child. Ask about what he reads—and then listen to his answers with interest.

**Source:** “10 tips on hearing your child read,” Topmarks Education, [www.topmarks.co.uk/Parents/ReadingTips.aspx](http://www.topmarks.co.uk/Parents/ReadingTips.aspx).

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“There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island.”

—Walt Disney

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