

Building Readers[®]



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How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Motivate readers with irresistible fun

When children resist reading books, it helps to use creative encouragement. For example, one teacher left clues around the school related to what the class was reading. The students read each one, which led to an exciting final discovery.

You can do the same thing at home. Read your child's assignment with him.

Then make up games related to the plot. For example, hide written clues that direct him to more hints. ("Then Joey went to his secret hideout, a room that was painted blue.") The trail should end at a reward, such as a treat mentioned in the book.

Source: Ron Clark, *The Excellent 11*, ISBN: 1-4013-0141-X (Hyperion, 212-456-0133, 1-800-759-0190, www.HyperionBooks.com).



Tip Before your next drive, stick a child's book in the glove compartment. It'll come in handy when you're stuck in traffic or your child is bored. If reading in the car makes her queasy, listen to an audiobook instead.

Q: I don't "get" poetry. But how can I help my child enjoy it?

A: Do an experiment with kid-tested poetry, such as works by Shel Silverstein.

Read a poem once without emotion. Then try it again and:

- Speak as clearly as possible.
- Use plenty of enthusiasm.
- Stress repeated vowel and consonant sounds.
- Speed up or slow down when it feels appropriate.

• Point out illustrations in the book.

This will make poems understandable and lots of fun for you both!

Source: "Classroom Poetry Kit," ShelSilverstein.com, www.shelsilverstein.com/PDF/classroom.pdf.



Questions & Answers

Divide reading projects into manageable parts

Advice often given to kids who struggle with reading is actually helpful to kids of *all* reading abilities: Read in small parts.

After your child reads a section, ask, "What did you just learn?" If she's not sure, have her read it again.

Source: Russell Gersten, Ph.D., and Scott Baker, Ph.D., *Reading Comprehension Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities*, www.ld.org/research/nclrd_reading_comp.cfm.

Measure reading level easily



"Is this book the right level for my child?" you wonder. "Or should I help him with it?"

Here's how to figure it out:

- If your child can read almost all of the words on his own, you don't need to help much.
- If he struggles a little, sit with him while he reads.
- If your child can read fewer than nine out of 10 words, help him find an easier book.

Source: Linda K. Rath, Ed.D., and Louise Kennedy, *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, ISBN: 0-06-051027-7 (HarperCollins, 212/261-6500, HarperCollins.com).

Resource for families

Can't find a dictionary? Word Central to the rescue (www.wordcentral.com)! Your child can get word definitions—and even add to a silly word list created by other kids. Chances are she'll learn some unexpected things.

What do you know about reading aloud?



How much do you know about reading aloud to your child? Take the following quiz to find out. Answer *True* or *False* to each of the following statements:

- ___ 1. **Children of all ages** can be read to.
- ___ 2. **Kids should be encouraged** to ask questions and make comments while being read to.
- ___ 3. **Reading with feeling** teaches kids new concepts.
- ___ 4. **Kids learn new words** when being read to.
- ___ 5. **Families get quality time** together while reading aloud.

How did you do?

If you answered *True* to all of the above statements, you're an expert at reading aloud! Mostly *False*? Take some hints from the quiz and read to your child for some quality time together.

Source: "Quiz: What do you know about reading to your child?" BabyCenter.com, www.babycenter.com/quizresults/baby/babydevelopment/1324634.html?_DARGS=%2Farticle%2Fquiz%2Fform.jhtml.

What makes magazines so popular with families?

Ever wonder why there are so many children's magazines available today? Because kids love them! Even parents enjoy learning from them. Here's what families enjoy:

- The articles are short and easy to read.
- The photos and drawings grab kids' attention.
- They're easily carried anywhere.
- They're inexpensive.
- They contain a lot of variety.
- They're detail-specific to kids' favorite subjects.
- They're mail. Everyone loves to receive something special!

Source: "Getting the Family Excited About Magazines," Reading Is Fundamental, www.rif.org/parents/articles/magazines.msp.

Turn bad reading habits into good ones

Reading is a wonderful hobby, but it does require some responsibility. Here are three common reading problems followed by easy ways to turn them around:



1. **Damaged books.** Choose a special spot for books where they won't get trampled—like a basket.
2. **Overdue library books.** Visit the library weekly with your child. Have her return items and check out new ones.
3. **Staying up too late reading.** On occasional weekend nights, let your child stay up later to read. Other nights, tuck her in early so she has time to read in bed before lights out.

Source: Cara Pitterman, "Breaking Bad Reading Habits," Scholastic.com, www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/gr3_5/badhabits.htm.



Tiny's Bath, by Cari Meister (Puffin Books). Young children can read this

book cover to cover—all by themselves. Meanwhile, they'll smile about how a boy bathes his messy, oversized dog.

Dinosaurs Before Dark, by Mary Pope Osborne (Random House). Jack and Annie use a magic tree house to visit the dinosaur era. Imagine the creatures they meet and what they learn!

Revise and reenact favorite stories



After finishing a story, your child can bring it to life by acting it out. He can even change the story. Follow these steps to act out your favorites:

- Discuss the parts of the story, like the characters and setting.
- Choose characters to be and props to use.
- Have fun acting it out!
- Create new stories based on the old one.

Source: "Favorite Stories," KidsNStuff.org, www.kidsnstuff.org/dramal.htm.

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