

Building Readers[®]

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Rochester Community Schools

Encourage your child to enjoy journaling

You buy your child a journal—and it sits unused. How can you interest her in filling it up? Try these three ideas:

- 1. Create a scrapbook.** It might have an inspiring theme, such as “Weekend Fun.” Have your child add mementos—like ticket stubs and photos. She can include drawings and descriptions, too.
- 2. Involve a friend.** On one page, your child can write something. (“Jenny loves to ski.”) Then the friend writes something on the next page. (“Bruce likes gymnastics.”) Keep alternating pages.
- 3. Relax about words.** If your child is a beginning writer, drawing a lot of pictures is fine. There may only be a word or sentence on each page—or something your child dictates to you.

Source: Jill Frankel Hauser, *Wow! I'm Reading!* ISBN: 1-885593-41-4 (Williamson Publishing Co., available on amazon.com).



Getty Images

Overcome reading challenges with perseverance and a positive outlook

Reading is part of many home and school activities, so when a child struggles with it, it can feel as if it affects every part of life. To make matters worse, you may worry about whether reading difficulties hurt your child's self-esteem. To help your child:

- **Consult experts**, including your child's teacher. Ask about realistic expectations. Is your child reading at grade level? If not, what help is available?
- **Use reading materials** at home that minimize frustration. For example, choose books that are easy to understand and read. They should have very few difficult words.
- **Stay positive** about your child's learning. Focus on how his strengths can help him. Make sure others are doing the same.

Source: Carl B. Smith and Roger Sensenbaugh, “Helping Children Overcome Reading Difficulties,” *KidSource OnLine*, www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/help.overcome.html.

Improve attendance by learning, reading together



Here's an easy way to help your child do well in school: Get involved with all his learning, including reading.

Research shows that parent involvement helps students:

- **Boost** attendance.
- **Be** motivated.
- **Achieve** more.
- **Improve** behavior.
- **Feel** better about school—and even homework!

Source: American Federation of Teachers, “Building Parent-Teacher Relationships,” *Reading Rockets*, www.readingrockets.org/article/19308.

Read with MP3 players



Kids often wish they could use modern technologies, such as MP3 players. These days, some libraries offer children's books on these devices. When using them, keep the volume low and protect your child's hearing. (You can even attach a speaker.) Listening in a quiet setting may help with this.

Limit video game time—encourage reading instead



Does playing video games hurt your child's reading time? It's something to consider. In a study of kids and teens, “gamers” were compared to “nongamers.” Time spent gaming was linked to less time reading and studying.

Source: Miranda Hitti, “Playing Video Games May Zap Homework,” *WebMD*, www.webmd.com/parenting/news/20070702/playing-video-games-may-zap-homework.

Play 'Runaway Letters'

Wh_t l_tt_rs _re m_ssing fr_m th_se w_rds? C_n yo_p_t th_m b_ck? If you can figure out which letters have “run away” from those words, you can play this fun game with your second or third grader.

Start by writing a short sentence. Stick to small words at first. For example: “I l_ke our c_t T_gger.” See if your child can fill in the blanks.

You may have to help with words that aren't spelled the way they sound. For example, your child might put the letter “u” in “br_ther”. Tell her she has a great ear, but this is a difficult word. Then explain the correct answer.

This is a good game for when you only have a few minutes, such as when you're waiting in the doctor's office.

Source: Peggy Kaye, *Games for Learning*, ISBN: 0-3745-2286-3 (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 212-741-6900, www.fsgbooks.com).

Building reading fluency takes teamwork

If your child doesn't read smoothly yet, there are many ways you can improve his fluency. Spend time:

- **Reading together.** Try reading aloud at the same time. (You be the leader.) Run your finger along words as you read them, and invite your child to join you.
- **Listening to him read.** The more your child reads and enjoys it, the better. He can also read text silently while you read it aloud. It's good to read favorite books more than once.



Getty Images

- **Setting a good example.** When you read, be clear and expressive. Hearing your fluency will be a learning experience for your child.

Source: “Fluency: Helping Your Child Read and Understand,” Families and Advocates Partnership for Education, www.fape.org/pubs/fape-37.pdf.



Q. My child is learning about analogies and metaphors. Are they the same thing?

A. No. An *analogy* compares two similar things. For example, “The brick was the size of a shoe box.” A *metaphor* makes two things seem exactly the same. When talking about a smart person, for instance, someone might say, “She is Albert Einstein.” *Similes* compare things, too, but use the words “like” or “as.”

Source: “Writing Tip #13: Analogies, Metaphors, and Similes,” University of Colorado at Boulder, www.colorado.edu/pwrr/writingtips/13.html.

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



For lower elementary readers:

BooBoo by Olivier Dunrea (Houghton Mifflin). This short tale about a hungry gosling makes young readers giggle. Even better, the author has written many similar books.

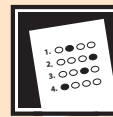
A Picture Book of Benjamin Franklin by David Adler (Holiday House). Young readers will enjoy (and learn from) this look at an amazing man's life. Parents may learn something, too!

For upper elementary readers:

The Misadventures of Maude March by Audrey Coulombis (Yearling). Two sisters, one of whom loves reading, set off on a real-life adventure. This story has a fun, Wild West theme.

Roxie and the Hooligans by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (Aladdin). Nine-year-old Roxie faces “hooligans” at school. Thankfully, she has a book about surviving pitfalls, which she puts to good use.

Offer reading tips for tests



Reading is a key part of taking tests. Advise your child to read directions carefully. He can even highlight key parts of the instructions. If something is confusing, he should ask the teacher about it. Still confused? He might skip the hardest questions and return to them later.

Source: “Studying for Tests,” infoplease.com, www.infoplease.com/homework/studyskills4.html.

“That is a good book which is opened with expectation and closed in profit.”

—Amos Bronson Alcott

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Managing Editor: Pat Hodgdon.

Editor: Jennifer McGovern. Writer: Susan O'Brien.

Copyright © 2008, The Parent Institute® (a division of NIS, Inc.)

P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3302

www.parent-institute.com