

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Rochester Community Schools

Find creative ways to write

Writing doesn't have to be difficult. Show your child that it's enjoyable by asking him to:

- **Make a photo album.** Put one photo on each page and let your child write the captions. Young children can write simple labels, such as "Dad."
- **Set the table.** Have your child set places and mark them with place cards he has decorated. (Index cards folded in half work well.)
- **Create invitations.** Plan a special event, such as a Saturday breakfast. Then have your child make invitations.

For example, "Come to a pancake breakfast at 9!"

Source: Jill Frankel Hauser, *Wow! I'm Reading!* ISBN: 1-885593-41-4 (Williamson Publishing, 1-800-234-8791, www.williamsonbooks.com).



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"Research and practice show that one simple activity—reading aloud—is the best way to prepare children for learning to read and to keep them reading as they learn and grow."

—Reading Is Fundamental

Put summer reading success in writing

Keeping a summer reading log helps students recognize their reading accomplishments. To encourage this, join summer reading programs run by:

- **The school.** Some schools give kids a summer reading challenge. For example, those who read a certain number of hours get to have a celebration in the fall.
- **The library.** Libraries make a big effort to promote reading over the summer. Ask about kids' reading activities and contests. There may be exciting prizes to win.
- **You!** Help your child set summer reading goals. Make a chart so she can see progress. Bring reading materials to the pool, park and elsewhere. Celebrate her success!

Build vocabulary at breakfast



Next time you pour cereal for your child, consider leaving the box at her place. Then play the cereal box game. To start:

- **Choose roles.** One person (or team) calls out words from the box. Another person writes them down. Begin with 10 words or fewer.
- **Join forces.** Make up a story using the words you found. Take turns adding sentences. The sillier, the better!

Source: "Cereal Box Stories," FamilyEducation.com, <http://life.familyeducation.com/storytelling/family-time/36234.html>.

Book lists are a click away



Wondering where to find award-winning children's books? Visit the American Library Association (ALA) online. The ALA lists its Caldecott and Newbery Medal winners—past and present—at www.ala.org.

Provide reasons to read



If your child isn't interested in books, don't give up. Keep brainstorming about materials that will fascinate him. Show your child:

- **A funny comic strip** or the kids' page in your local newspaper.
- **A book** of amazing facts.
- **A joke book.**
- **A collection** of sports cards.
- **Instructions** for how to play his favorite game.

Source: Linda K. Rath, Ed.D., and Louise Kennedy, *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, ISBN: 0-06-051027-7 (HarperCollins, 212-207-7000, www.harpercollins.com).

Help your child understand difficult words

You can tell when your child can't read a homework assignment. He's likely to squirm in his seat, get sleepy, look anxious or even misbehave. When you see these signs, you can:

1. **Ask if there's a word** he doesn't understand. Read the sentence together.
2. **Help him look up the word** in a kids' dictionary.
3. **Check his understanding.** Have him use the word in a new sentence.

Remember that trouble can occur with both big and small words. Even punctuation marks, such as periods and commas, can be confusing. Stay available to help during homework time.

Source: "Description of Clearing Up Misunderstood Words," Learning Network, www.fen.com/whatworks/item/front/0,2551,1-9126-4181-14,00.html.

Add excitement to summer reading routines

Summer is almost here—the perfect time to relax with reading. Instead of “assigning” reading to your child, make it fun! You can:

- **Allow late-night reading.** Make bedtime 30 minutes later when your child wants to stay up and read.
- **Visit the library regularly.** Let your child pick reading materials (including comic books and magazines), as long as you approve of their content.
- **Read aloud to your child.** Even if she's an excellent reader, she'll love hearing you read with lots of expression.



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- **Listen to audio books.** They're great on long trips, but kids also like to hear them at home with the printed book in hand.

Source: Dr. Sylvia Rimm, *How to Parent So Children Will Learn: 3rd Edition*, ISBN: 978-0-910707-86-2 (Great Potential Press, Inc., 1-877-954-4200, www.giftedbooks.com).



Q. Will being a good reader help my child on standardized tests?

A. Yes! In fact, you've been preparing your child for standardized tests since you began reading to him. Kids need a strong vocabulary for standardized tests. And reading builds vocabulary. So read together often. And encourage your child to read independently, too.

Source: Judy Molland, *Straight Talk About Schools Today: 101 Q&As for Parents*, ISBN: 978-1-57542-219-0 (Free Spirit Publishing, 612-338-2068, www.freespirit.com).

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



For lower elementary readers:

ABC NYC: A Book About Seeing New York City by Joanne Dugan (Harry N. Abrams). Children learn about letters and more in this book of photos, which connects the alphabet to city life. M, for example, is for *manhole cover*.

Ring! Yo? by Chris Raschka (DK Publishing). Readers get to see one side of a conversation—and imagine the other. What are two boys discussing on the phone?

For upper elementary readers:

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick (Scholastic Press). Hugo lives a secret life in Paris. But when he runs into a young girl and an old man, both his hidden life and most sacred secret are in danger of being exposed.

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village by Laura Amy Schlitz (Candlewick). This book of monologues brings to life an English village in the year 1255.

Use conversations to boost your child's comprehension



Reading to your child is an essential way to support her education. To take this a step further, talk about books after you read them. This builds understanding. Ask questions such as, “How did the story begin?” “How did it end?” “Who was the main character?” “Did you agree with her choices?” Keep talking for as long as the conversation is fun.

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