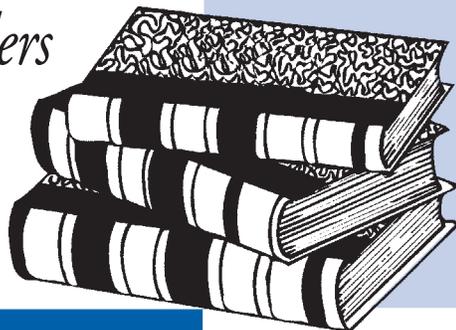


*Helping
your children
become readers
by reading
together*



FAMILY READING

- LEARN THE ABCs OF FAMILY READING
- HAVE FUN READING TOGETHER!
- GIVE YOUR CHILD A GOOD START IN READING
- ADD TO YOUR CHILD'S BEGINNING READING SKILLS
- CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OLDER READERS

PLUS: A PARENT'S CHECKLIST

*A public service publication of the
Sonoma County Office of Education*

ABOUT THE SONOMA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

As one of 58 county offices of education in California, the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) provides leadership, support, and fiscal oversight to all school districts in Sonoma County. In these 40 districts, there are 170 schools and 73,000 students.

The Sonoma County Office of Education supports local districts in building strong, effective educational systems. In particular, the County Office offers services to help districts operate cost-effectively and provides assistance to schools so that all students receive the best possible education. Under the direction of the elected county superintendent of schools, the Sonoma County Office of Education:

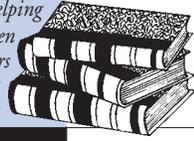
- Provides classroom instruction for students with special needs;
- Assists schools in improving instruction and achievement;
- Offers centralized services such as budget management, media and technology resources, staff development, and legal services;
- Supports and supervises districts in complying with state law;
- Leads and organizes efforts to bring increased educational resources to Sonoma County.

The Sonoma County Office of Education also initiates projects to engage parents and the community in the education of children. Increasing public awareness of what students are learning in schools today has been a particular priority.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Family Reading: Helping Your Children Become Readers by Reading Together was developed and produced as a public service by the Sonoma County Office of Education. It was edited by Suzanne Gedney. Art design services were provided by Sue Schreiner, with photography by Patty Bernstein. The publication was prepared for distribution in January 1998 and reissued in August 1998 and February 2004. It is available in both English and Spanish.

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FAMILY READING

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

When it comes to reading and how parents can help their children learn to read, the message is clear and straightforward: *read, read, read*. Read to your children. Read with your children. Listen to your children read to you. Let your children see you reading. Talk about reading. Make reading a family priority.

Reading at home will give your children a tremendous advantage in school. It's that simple. A child who comes to school having had early, enjoyable experiences with books is, as any primary grade teacher can tell you, far ahead of others in literacy skills, attention span, and ability to experience success in school. There's no question about it—children who are learning to read benefit *significantly* from the practice and experience that family reading provides.

Sonoma County schools are doing better than ever in teaching children how to read. But no matter how good a school's instruction is, parents remain the single, most powerful influence on their children's overall reading success. Your role is *that* important.

This booklet is designed to give you some ideas about how to become a "reading family" and some help establishing a family reading tradition that will benefit your children for years to come. The suggestions in this booklet come from a variety of sources; many are practices you may have heard about before or are already doing.

The Sonoma County Office of Education brings this booklet to you with a goal of encouraging stronger, better parent support for young readers. We hope you and your family find this resource helpful.

Working together, we can increase the reading achievement of every single one of Sonoma County's 73,000 public school students.

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FAMILY READING

SOME ABCs OF FAMILY READING

One of the most important skills your child will ever learn is how to read. Reading opens doors to great ideas, unlimited information, and rich, full lives.

Children are taught how to read in school, but studies show that families are an essential part of this learning process. In other words, by reading to and with your child at home, you can make a great difference.

Each family is unique and each family will create its own traditions of reading together. Here are three basic strategies for making family reading a success in your home.

A. SPEND TIME READING

Children learn to read by being read to and by reading. It's often said that the most important thing parents can do to make their children readers is simply to read with them—and the more the better!

The first fundamental of family reading success, then, is to spend time reading together ... to dedicate time for you and your child to sit down together and look at, read, and talk about books. After all, children will get good at what they practice.

Family reading can happen in just 15 minutes (although 30 minutes is better). Research actually shows that just 15 minutes a day of reading with a child can mean improved learning throughout school and lead to a lifetime of reading enjoyment.

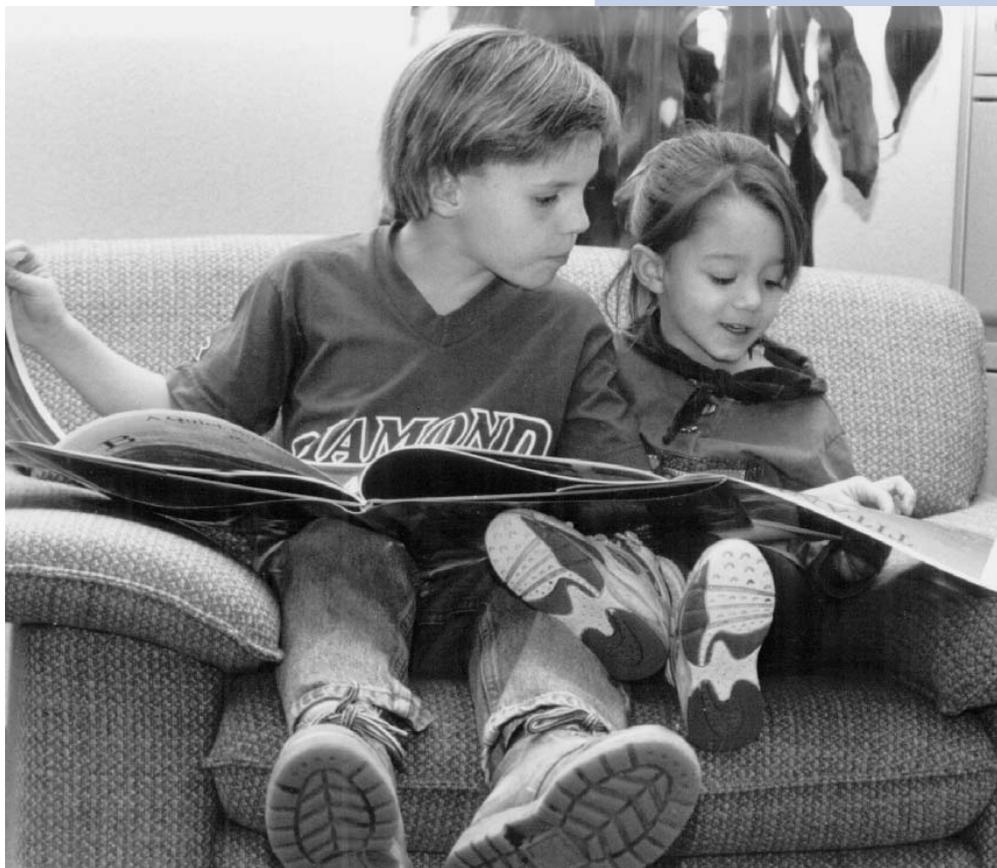
B. ESTABLISH READING ROUTINES

Read regularly. In today's busy families, reading together needs to be a scheduled priority. By setting aside a specific time for family reading, you'll establish a routine and create an expectation for reading. Reading together then becomes a regular activity that your children look forward to, as opposed to a special event. This is the second key to family reading success.

Many families routinely read at bedtime, but other times may work in your house. Pick a time that you and your child both like. Or be spontaneous, but be sure reading happens often and consistently. For example, you might commit to 20 minutes of family reading at least three evenings a week as your schedule permits, plus extra time on the weekend. If you miss a day or get off schedule, don't worry ... just pick it up again when you can.

In addition to establishing a dedicated time for reading, try to read with your children whenever they ask. By reading when your children want to, you let them know that reading is a good way for *all* of you to spend time.

Routinely keep books close at hand and put books in places your children will be. If books are beside the toy box, train set, or doll house, they're more likely to be picked up. Keep books in the car or van. Put books about cooking in the kitchen. Carry books along when you go to the dentist or doctor's office. Get in the habit of having books around.



Max and Zoë Feldman

PAUSE, PRAISE, AND PROMPT.

When you're reading with your child, remember that



pausing gives children time to work out words for

themselves, *praising* helps children know when they're doing the right thing and encourages them to keep on trying, and *prompting* gives children assistance so they don't get frustrated.

CREATE A HOME LIBRARY.

If possible, create a home library for your child so that books are always close at hand and part of your daily life. Garage sales and used book stores are good sources for inexpensive children's books. Supplement your child's collection with a rotating selection from your local library. Find a special place for your child to keep books—a box, shelf, drawer, or cabinet.

C. TALK ABOUT WHAT'S BEING READ

The third fundamental of family reading success is talking with your child before, during, and after you read together. This is important because reading isn't just sounding out words—it's understanding written language. To encourage your child to think about and understand the meaning of words, it's important to engage your child in conversation about stories.

Look at the cover and title of a book and talk about what you think the story is about. If a story is set in a town, talk about how the story's buildings look like buildings that are familiar to your child. If there's a grandfather in the story, encourage your child to compare him with a real-life grandparent. If there are things your child doesn't understand, stop and explain as you read.

Ask your child questions about what you're reading, especially questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no. What part of the story did you like best? Why? Did the story end the way you wanted it to? Why or why not? What character did you like best? Stop in the middle of a story and ask, "What do you think will happen next?"

As children figure out the meaning of stories with adults, they learn to participate, reflect, and recall—all of which will contribute to their reading comprehension skill and long-term school success.

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FAMILY READING

When families read together—and have fun doing it—they tend to read a lot. Young children who are just learning to read can, however, get frustrated if reading with their parents is too challenging or if it happens only at bedtime when they're ready to drop off to sleep. Here are some ideas for making reading together an enjoyable and meaningful experience for your family.

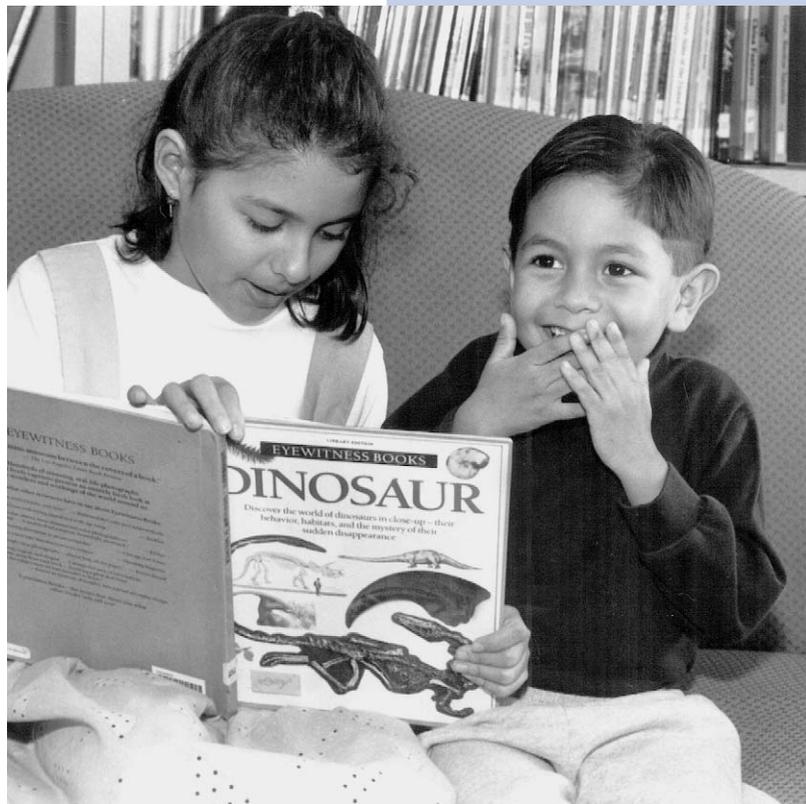
HAVE FUN READING TOGETHER!

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE TO READ

- Choose a place that's as quiet and peaceful as possible.
- Turn off other distractions like the television, radio, or stereo.
- Choose a time when your child is not tired, hungry, or eager to do something else.

FIND APPROPRIATE READING MATERIAL

- Select books that are of interest to your child. Let your child take the lead in choosing books.
- Stories should not be too difficult. Reading at home should not be a struggle for your child. It should be a positive experience. It should be fun!
- If you're not sure whether a book is at the right level, have your child read a couple of sentences aloud. If your child makes more than two errors, the book is probably too hard for independent reading (although it may be a great book for you to read aloud).



Itzia and Pablo Ochoa

READING OPPORTUNITIES ARE EVERYWHERE

Picture books and novels read at bedtime are the traditional material and time for reading, but there are many more kinds of reading activities for families. Use this checklist for reading ideas and opportunities you can promote at home.

- Newspapers, including movie reviews, comics, weather charts, television listings, etc.
- Magazines, especially ones that focus on your child's interests
- Recipes and cookbooks
- Family bulletin boards, calendars, and activity schedules
- Scrapbooks and photo albums with captions and labels
- Lists, including shopping lists, wish lists, "to do" lists, etc.
- Letters and thank you notes (get grandparents and other relatives involved)
- Instructions for games, science experiments, craft projects, etc.
- Home reference materials, including phone books and dictionaries
- Books on tape
- Computer projects—produce family invitations and signs, use CD-ROMs for research, explore the Internet, read books on disk, etc.
- Signs and labels, including road signs, signs in stores, labels on toys, cereal boxes, etc.

- The librarian at your local library can also help select books at your child's reading level.
- As possible, build a home library so your child always has reading material close at hand.
- Reread your child's favorite books whenever asked.

HAVE A GOOD TIME

- When you're reading to your child, use lots of expression.
- Talk together about the story and pictures.
- Avoid criticism and comparison with other children.
- Relax! Stop if you feel yourself or your child becoming frustrated.

GIVE LOTS OF PRAISE

- Praise your child for trying, even if it's wrong.
- Praise your child for finding the right word after making a mistake.
- Praise your child for reading a word correctly after you've given help.

GIVE HELP WHEN NEEDED

- If your child stops at an unknown or unrecognized word, always pause and give your child a chance to think about the word and the meaning of the story. Wait a full five seconds before saying anything.
- After pausing, you may want to simply tell your child the word and let him/her continue on with the story.
- At other times, you may want to prompt your child to sound out a word (or sound out the word yourself to show how it's done). Encourage your child to sound out words rather than guessing.
- If sounding out isn't working, tell your child the word and continue on with the story. Don't make your child struggle to figure out a word or feel bad because he/she didn't get it right.

TRY A DIFFERENT BOOK

- If your child is making lots of mistakes, stop and read the book aloud ... or help find an easier story.
- If your child isn't interested in a particular book, try to get him/her interested by reading the first few pages aloud and talking about the story together ... or help find a more interesting book.
- If the story is too long, read one page (or chapter) to the child, then have the child read one to you and continue alternating ... or help find a shorter story.
- If you're not sure if a book is at the right reading level, have your child read a page or two and make an assessment. Change books or read the book aloud if it's too hard for your child to read independently.

Source: *The California Reading Association*

GET OTHERS IN ON THE READING ACT.

Make sure *both* parents take turns at read-



ing. If you're a single parent, ask the baby-sitter or

childcare provider to read as part of each day. Have older children read to younger ones—the older children will be proud of their skills, while the younger children will want to read like their big brothers and sisters. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles make good readers, too.

CHOOSING BOOKS.

When at the library, encourage your child to select books. Don't worry if a selected book is too hard—that can be the child's "look book" of the week or one you read aloud. Always make sure you check out a couple of books that your child can read independently with ease and pleasure. Also include some books you'll enjoy reading aloud. Ask a librarian for help choosing books that match your family's needs and interests.

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FAMILY READING

GIVE YOUR CHILD A GOOD START IN READING

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. You've already taught your child one of the most complex and difficult skills imaginable—how to speak. In a similar way, you can now lay the foundation for your child's next language-learning step—how to read written words.

Learning to read is a complex process that develops over a long period of time. It definitely requires lots of practice, both in and out of school. Parents and other members of the family can support a child's early stages of "learning to read" in the following ways.

SHARE BOOKS AND READ ALOUD

Find time to read aloud with your child every day. "Lap time" with picture books and stories in a comfortable, supportive setting can strongly motivate a young child to learn to read and enjoy reading.

LEARN THE ALPHABET

Play alphabet games. Sing the alphabet song to help your child learn letters as you play with alphabet books, blocks, and magnetic letters. Recite letters as you go up and down stairs or give pushes on a swing. Games, puzzles, books on tape, and letter-play books are available at most toy stores. Computer games can also help teach letters to children.

TEACH ABOUT BOOKS AND PRINTED WORDS

When reading aloud, let your child open the book and turn the pages. Point to the words as you read. Draw attention to repeated phrases, inviting your child to join in each time they occur. Point out letters and words you see in daily life. Make an obvious effort to read traffic signs, billboards, notices, labels, maps, and phone numbers aloud to show your child how printed

words relate to daily living.

Make writing materials—paper and crayons—available to your child and encourage their use. Help your child learn to write his or her name and other important words and phrases. Gradually help your child learn to write more and more letters. Encourage your child to say the sounds of letters as he or she writes. At first, many children find it easier to write uppercase letters.

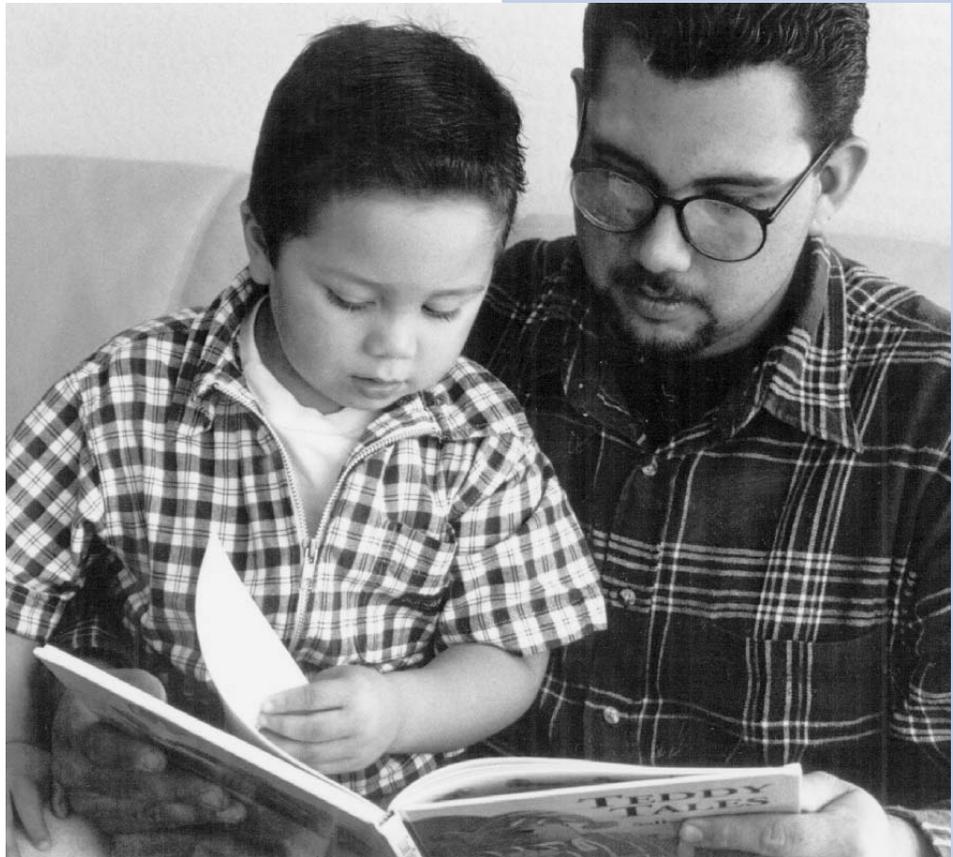
PLAY WORD-BUILDING GAMES

Teach your child to spell a few special words. Challenge your child to read those words every place they appear. Draw attention to the words as you read books with your child. Encourage your child to read the words as they arise or to search them out on a page.

Use letter tiles or magnetic letters to build words with your child. Play with the letters, putting words together that you can both read.

PRACTICE SOUNDS AND SYLLABLES

Sing songs and read rhyming books. Sing the alphabet with your child and teach songs that emphasize rhyme or repeat letter sounds. Emphasize the sounds as you sing. Play rhyming games.



Alexander and Mike Puentes

THUMBS UP FOR READING SUCCESS!

Try this as a hassle-free way of reading with your



child, one that lets you easily provide a prompt when your child needs it without interrupting the flow of the story. Ask your child to raise a thumb when help is needed. Then your job is simply to say the word. This is a great way to make reading less of a struggle for beginning readers—and it helps parents become reading buddies rather than critics of their child’s reading ability.

Jumble the wording or word order of familiar poems or rhymes and challenge your child to detect the error. Talk like a robot, syllable by syllable, and use language in fun and interesting ways.

Play word games. For example, ask your child to think of words that rhyme with “bat” or begin with the “m” sound. What would be left if you took the “b” sound out of “bat”? Do “boat” and “baby” start with the same sound?

LEARN LETTER SOUNDS

Say the sounds that letters make. Sound out words. Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child’s name, drawing attention to the similarities of the beginning sound. Use alphabet books, computer games, or car games—such as, “I’m thinking of something that starts with bbbb”—to engage the child in letter-sound play. Find books that lend themselves to letter-sound play, then sound out rhyming words as you read or challenge your child to do so for you. Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words. For example, if c–a–t spells “cat,” how do you spell “hat”?

LEARN NEW WORDS

Point out new words. Say the sound while touching each letter in the new word. For example, say “s–a–t” and then blend sounds to create the word. In practicing new words, use words with simple sounds and spellings, like “fun” and “sat” rather than “night” and “saw.”

When listening to your child read, encourage sounding out new words; however, if too many words require this kind of attention and effort, it’s best to find an easier book.

Play spelling games with your child. After your child begins pronouncing words, encourage spelling by saying each sound in words and then writing the letter that goes with the sound.

Encourage your child to spell. After your child has learned to pronounce words, practice saying each sound and then blending them together.

HELP YOUR CHILD BEGIN WRITING

Let your child use inventive or phonic spelling when learning to write. In the early stages, your child will tend to omit letters and confuse letter names with letter sounds, producing such spellings as LFNT for elephant, BN for bean, and FARE for fairy. Encourage your child to look at how words are spelled. Help your child learn word patterns as spelling skills are developed over time.

REREAD EASY, ENJOYABLE BOOKS

Help your child read easy, enjoyable stories as often as possible. Your child will probably enjoy reading more and learn more from reading if you sit together, take turns reading, and talk about what you read. In the beginning, invite your child to read specific words. Then, gradually, as the child becomes able, take turns with sentences, speakers, paragraphs, and pages. At the end of each section or story, revisit those words that caused trouble. Rereading the entire story over several days, and again weeks later, is a powerful way to reinforce learning.

TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU READ TOGETHER

Pause to talk as you read. As you read stories to and with your child, stop frequently to discuss language, content, and relevance to real life. Pause to explore the meaning of new words, using them in other sentences and comparing what they mean with words that have similar meanings. Make an effort to review new words and concepts after the book has been put aside.

Source: The California State Board of Education's "Tips for Parents to the California Reading Initiative of 1996"

IS IT OK IF YOUR CHILD WANTS TO READ THE SAME BOOK OVER AND OVER?



Yes! One of your goals is to help your child develop

a love of reading. A child with favorite books reflects that interest. Young children, especially, enjoy the security of having the same books read to them many times. Often, a frequently read book is the one a child begins reading independently.

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FAMILY READING

ADD TO YOUR CHILD'S BEGINNING READING SKILLS

Educators say that children “learn to read” in the early elementary grades, then they “read to learn” in the upper elementary grades and beyond. Family reading can help prepare your child to explore complex ideas and materials through reading. Here are some suggestions for supporting your child’s ongoing skill development and reading comprehension.

ENCOURAGE READING FOR FUN AND INFORMATION

Older children should read a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes every day. Turn off the TV! Talk to your children about what they’re learning in school and take the time to visit the public library for additional books and information related to school lessons. Give books and writing materials (pens, pencils, paper, stationery, etc.) to your child as gifts. Read aloud at every age. Demonstrate the value of reading and how important it is to everyday life.

TEACH THAT LANGUAGE IS MADE OF WORDS, SYLLABLES, AND SOUNDS

Provide opportunities for your child to practice pronouncing longer words, play word games with increasingly more complex vocabulary, and use the dictionary to find words of interest. Encourage games and activities that focus attention on language elements, particularly word and sound units.

Build confidence by encouraging your child to reread selected paragraphs or favorite story parts. By increasing reading speed and accuracy with familiar text, children are better able to focus on the meaning of what they’re reading.

TEACH THAT WRITTEN TEXT HAS MEANING

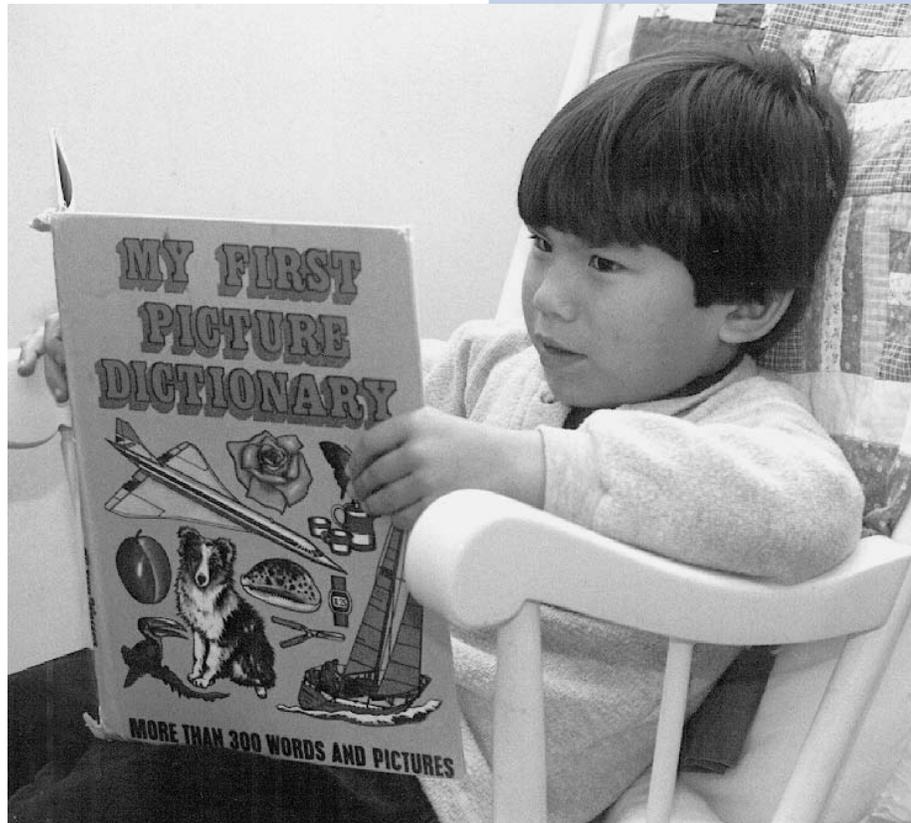
When reading stories, pause to discuss the various characters, problems, and events in the story. Invite your child to think about how the problems might be solved or to wonder about

what might happen next.

When resuming the story, ask your child to review what's happened so far, drawing attention to looming mysteries and unresolved conflicts. In reading books for information, invite your child to marvel at the creatures or events described or to wonder about details not mentioned in the text.

HELP YOUR CHILD ASK QUESTIONS

Help your child pose questions that focus on relevant concepts in reading. Talk about how new information is linked to information your child already knows. Help your child predict what may come next in a story or a text. Have your child read silently, then close the book and re-tell what was read. Check back in the text to confirm or clarify what was remembered.



Michael Romero

PRACTICE SPELLING AND VOCABULARY

Encourage spelling practice, focusing your child on words that are grouped by frequency of use and spelling patterns. Spelling can also be practiced within the context of writing tasks related to school work and your child's personal interests. Active study of words—write them, trace them, say them—gets the best results.

Help your child learn and practice new vocabulary. Define new words from a dictionary or a book's glossary. Use new words in speaking and writing, associate new words with related words and concepts, and create activities that require reasoning about the meaning of words.

Source: The California State Board of Education's "Tips for Parents to the California Reading Initiative of 1996"



Nancy, Erica, Matthew, and Mark Wheeler

USE TV TO SUPPORT GOOD READING HABITS

If you're concerned about the amount of television your child watches, accent the positive aspects of television viewing by using it to enrich reading and communication skills. Here are some ideas for how you can use television in a positive way.

- Limit the amount of television your child watches. Decide how much time should be set aside for daily viewing and have your child keep a log of time spent in front of the TV.
- Watch television with your child and talk about what you view.
- Serve as an example by limiting the amount of television you watch yourself.
- Set aside times when the TV is turned off and the entire family spends time reading. Just 15 or 20 minutes of family reading every day, or several times a week, can make a huge difference in your child's reading skills.
- Practice selective TV viewing. Before the television is turned on, ask your child to choose the programs he/she wants to watch and give you reasons for the choices.
- Ask your child to describe favorite TV characters and tell or write stories about them.
- Encourage your child to watch age-appropriate informational programs on TV. Discuss interesting topics and direct your child to books for more information.

Source: *International Reading Association*

READ ALOUD TO CHILDREN OF ALL AGES.

Don't stop reading to your children when



they learn to read! As children enter school and

develop independent reading skills, family storytime often diminishes—but young readers can really learn a lot when adults continue to read aloud to them. By listening to you read stories and text that are too hard for independent reading, your child will learn how complex stories take shape, how authors use words, and how fluent adult reading sounds.

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FAMILY READING

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OLDER READERS

Once a strong pattern of reading is established, your young son or daughter may be ready to embark on a lifelong reading habit that needs little encouragement. Continuing to provide access to books and taking the time to talk with your child about his/her reading may be all that's needed.

For other children, however, it's not unusual to notice a loss of interest in reading or to hear the words, "I don't like books. I don't want to read." As a parent, you know reading is important and you want to make sure your child grows into adulthood with all the skills needed to succeed. What can you do?

CONTINUE TO SET AN EXAMPLE

Let your child see you read. If adults in the home don't read, the children aren't likely to pick up the reading habit. This is true whether your children are toddlers or teens.

PROVIDE A VARIETY OF READING MATERIAL

Leave books, magazines, and newspapers around. Check to see what disappears for a clue to what's interesting your child. Anything your child reads—even the Sunday comics—is helping to build reading skills. Don't be critical if your child's reading a book of jokes or a sports magazine rather than a classic.

SHARE READING BY READING ALOUD

Older children learn and find pleasure when you read aloud to them, even when they're old enough to read independently. This can be as easy as finding interesting bits of information in newspapers to share or it can be more structured—like reading a favorite book aloud, chapter-by-chapter, throughout the week.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO CHOOSE BOOKS

Allow your son or daughter to choose their own reading material. Go to the library or browse a bookstore together, but go your separate ways and make your own selections. A bookstore gift certificate is a nice way of saying, “You choose.” Again, don’t be critical about your child’s selections.

TELL ABOUT A BOOK YOU ENJOYED

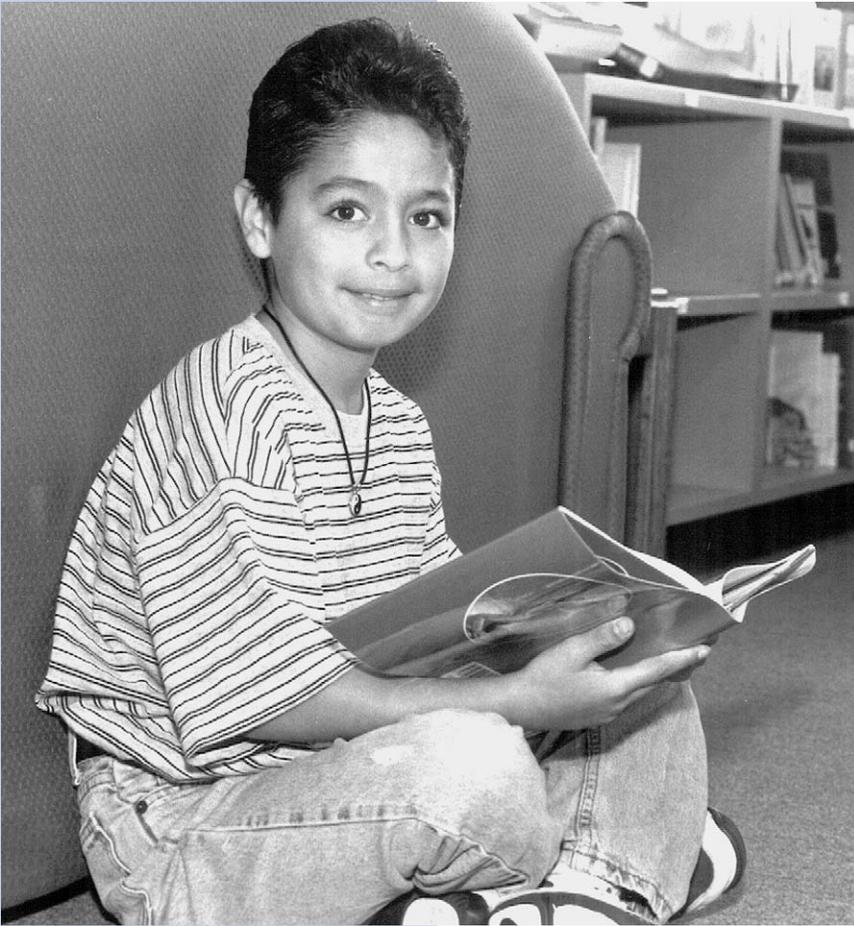
Find a book you liked when you were your child’s age. Read parts aloud to give your child a flavor of the book. Talk about it. Ask your child’s opinion. Or talk about a book or magazine article you’re reading yourself.



*Nancy Rogers-Zegarra
and Allison Zegarra*

FIND OUT WHAT FRIENDS ARE READING

At certain ages, children are more likely to read a book recommended by a friend than by an adult. Arrange book swaps



Sergio Daniel Ochoa

HELP WITH HARD WORDS.

Encourage your child to sound out unknown words—and take



TIPS

the time to model how that's done.

Make sure your child doesn't guess at words, but "figures them out." If sounding out is too hard or causing frustration, it's best to tell your child the unknown word.

or find out what your child's friends are reading and look for those books in the library or bookstore.

BUILD ON YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS

Look for books and other reading material that features a favorite sports team, musician, or TV show. Give a gift subscription to a special interest magazine. Start your child on a literary series so that they

get to know a character whose adventures span many books. Read a book with a movie tie-in. Try a book on tape or a book on disk.

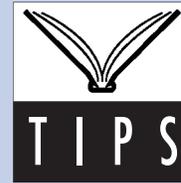
Source: Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

IDEAS FOR READING FAMILIES

- **ORAL STORYTELLING GAMES:** Begin with quick oral games like Exaggeration. Each player picks a topic—for example, I’m so tall that ... (I can walk over the Empire State Building). Oral games get everyone thinking, listening, and participating at their own level.
- **READ-AND-DO TIME:** Show your children that reading isn’t just a school subject by providing books that engage them in fun projects or activities. Try cookbooks, science experiments, how-to books, craft books, sports tips, etc.
- **BOARD GAMES FOR READING POWER:** Language-based games like Scrabble, Trivia, and Pictionary (all of which have special versions for children) will help develop vocabulary and phonetic skills. Create a scoring system that allows players of all ages a fair chance.
- **FAMILY READING TIME:** This is an opportunity for quiet time together and for parents to model reading with a variety of materials (magazines, newspapers, books). Each reader reads quietly on their own, with any non-readers looking at picture books.
- **STORYTIME:** Take turns choosing books for reading aloud. Look for books that offer opportunities for funny voices, chime-in responses, or shared reading. Start by telling the story yourself with expression and enthusiasm. When family members are confident, encourage them to be the storyteller. Try using puppets, hats, or costumes. Set the mood with candles or music. Invite sound effects like moaning, stomping, or snoring. Have fun!

READ TO AND READ WITH.

Combine independent reading (where your child reads to you)



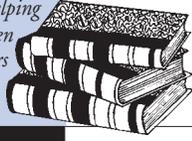
and reading aloud (where you read to your child) to

get the most out of family reading time. Make sure the books your child reads to you are at the right level; that is, that they can be read by your son or daughter with a minimum amount of struggle. Save more challenging books for reading aloud.

READING IDEAS FOR SPECIAL TIMES.

Give a book to your child as a birthday gift. Give a book to a school library to mark your child’s birthday. Spend a rainy day making a “rainy day book” of drawings and stories about rainy weather. Read before vacations to get ready for the activities your family plans to enjoy. Read during vacations. Listen to books on tape when you go on driving trips. Make a book about your family’s holiday traditions.

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FAMILY READING

A PARENT'S CHECKLIST: HELPING YOUR CHILD LISTEN, SPEAK, READ, AND WRITE

- I take time to talk with my child every day.
- I also take time to listen to my child and answer those countless questions.
- I read something myself every day. Every day, I model for my child that I get pleasure and information from reading.
- I have a library card and take my child to the library as often as possible. We both select books to read by ourselves and to read aloud together at home.
- We often look at books together, each of us sharing what we see and read.
- We have a special time set aside for reading, which we do as often as we can—every day if possible and sometimes many times a day.
- I ask my child to tell me stories and describe things he/she has done or seen.
- My child watches carefully selected television programs and I limit TV viewing so that there is plenty of time for reading.
- We talk about TV programs and often supplement what we've seen on TV with related reading.
- We play games together, including word and listening games.
- Whenever we take walks or go places together, we talk before, during, and after our excursions to maximize our experiences and increase word usage.
- My child has a special place for keeping all his/her books, as well as those we've borrowed from the library.
- I praise my child's efforts and accomplishments so that he/she will have self-confidence and be excited about new learning experiences.
- I encourage my child to do things as independently as possible.
- I take time to read aloud to my child each day, as often as I can and whenever my child asks me to, and I encourage all members of my family to do the same.

Source: Mary Mastain and the California Reading Association

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

If you'd like more information about family reading activities, reading education, or strategies for supporting your child's reading success, you'll find the following list of resources helpful. Internet websites with a reading focus are a great source of information for parents.

- *A Child Becomes a Reader: Proven Ideas for Parents from Research—Birth to Preschool and Kindergarten through Grade Three*, by Bonnie B. Armbruster, Fran Lehr, and Jean Osborn (ED Pubs, September 2002). These two excellent booklets offer age-appropriate advice for parents on how to support reading development at home and recognize preschool, primary school, and daycare activities that start children on the road to becoming readers. Both booklets can be downloaded for free at The Partnership for Reading website, www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading. Information about ordering printed copies is also available online.
- *Book Adventure* (www.bookadventure.org) is a free reading motivation program for children in grades K-8. Children create their own book lists from recommended titles, take multiple-choice quizzes on the books they've read, and earn points and prizes for their literacy success.
- *Get Ready to Read* (www.getreadytoread.org) is a site dedicated to ensuring that all preschool children have the skills they need to learn to read when they enter school. This site has interactive online reading games, screening tools, early literacy skill-building activities, and parent resources.
- *National Education Association* (www.nea.org/parents) has dedicated a section of its website to helping parents get involved in and improve their children's education.
- *National Institute for Literacy* (www.nifl.gov) is an independent federal organization leading the national effort toward a fully literate America in the 21st century.
- *Reading Rockets* (www.readingrockets.org) provides information about "teaching kids to read and helping those who struggle." This organization hosts a website for Spanish-speaking parents (www.colorincolorado.org), which is also dedicated to helping children learn to read.
- *Sonoma County Library* (www.sonoma.lib.ca.us/kids.html) has online resources to support reading, suggested reading lists for children, a calendar of children's programs offered at the library branches throughout the county, and more. A teen site is also available at www.sonoma.lib.ca.us/teens.html.

*Helping
your children
become readers
by reading
together*



FAMILY READING

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