
READING

MAKE IT THE FAMILY THING TO DO



A READING HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

READING: MAKE IT THE FAMILY THING TO DO



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It is no secret that our ability to do well in school, and in life, begins at home with an early introduction to the joys of reading and learning.

When we read, we discover the world around us and gain the ability to think and learn for ourselves. Reading is a lifelong pleasure which educates, informs and entertains. It allows everyone, regardless of age, to be active and involved in life and learning.

Make reading the family thing to do. Read to each other. Read and Succeed!



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INTRODUCTION

Encouraging children to read and write, starting when they are preschoolers, may be the most important thing families can do to help support success in school.

The home can provide

- individual attention
- many chances to talk and listen
- a relaxing place to read and learn
- a close bond with the child

The positive impact the home has on learning is recognized and supported throughout this booklet. Families will see many familiar things they already do to develop interest in reading and writing as well as some new, exciting things to make reading and writing a part of everyday experiences.



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ENCOURAGING LEARNING

How can families help children learn new things?

Families can play an important role in learning by

- *Making time and space for learning*
 - have materials such as paper, pencils, crayons, and books for reading, drawing, scribbling and writing
 - create a special place for reading and writing
 - make reading a part of family events
 - read daily, all kinds of print materials, such as stories, poems, information books, birthday cards, catalogues, lists, and invitations
 - reduce the time spent watching television and playing video games
 - make reading and writing a part of play such as playing school and writing shopping lists
 - participate in reading events at local libraries and other community organizations



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- *Recognizing children's efforts*
 - share children's work with others
 - praise children's efforts
 - display work such as pictures and writing
 - reward interest in reading by letting children choose their own books or give them books and writing materials as gifts
 - keep a scrapbook of growth in reading and writing as you would a baby book



- *Talking with children*
 - ask about what is happening in books and what will happen next
 - talk about the different kinds of things we read such as cards, notes, labels, and posters
 - play games that encourage talking
 - talk about books that others are reading
- *Demonstrating reading and writing*
 - show enjoyment when reading or writing
 - set aside times for reading and writing
 - let children see reading and writing in daily life, such as writing a note, reading a recipe, and making a list

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TALKING AND LISTENING

Why is it important to talk with children?

Through talking and listening, children learn

- new words and ideas
- to take turns when speaking with another person
- to talk about their thoughts and ideas

What are some ways families can provide opportunities for talking and listening?

Families can

- talk about how to make things such as recipes and crafts
- tell stories and sing songs
- provide experiences and talk about what they are doing such as berrypicking and gardening
- visit and talk about places such as parks, beaches, and walking trails



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- show interest in children's ideas by questioning or commenting
- sort household items in different ways such as by size, colour, and texture
- look and listen while children are speaking to them
- talk about what happened during the day



- invite children to have opinions
- talk about pictures in books and tell stories from pictures
- join in with children's play
- make up stories about daily activities

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READING TO CHILDREN

How does reading to children help them become readers?

Reading to children helps them learn how to listen, to share and to enjoy learning. They

- learn to listen for longer periods of time
- connect reading to having fun with others in the family
- hear what good reading sounds like
- learn how to hold a book, read from left to right, and look at words
- learn new words and ideas that can be used later in reading and writing
- learn about themselves and others

When should families begin to read to children?

It is best to begin reading to children when they are babies, but it is never too late to begin.

How long should reading time last?

Families can read to children for as long as the children are interested.

Who can read to children?

All members of a family can read to each other. It is important that children see both males and females reading.



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The following suggestions will help make reading enjoyable

- read slowly and talk about the pictures
- read the same book more than once

Involve young children by having them

- look at the pictures on the cover and inside the book
- talk about the cover and guess what might happen
- follow the words with their finger
- turn the pages
- join in when they know what comes next
- make sound effects for a story
- use a different voice for each character
- use a finger puppet or sock puppet to read a story
- invite friends over for “a read aloud party” and make it special by having a treat such as a bowl of blueberries to go with the book *Blueberries for Sal*



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CHOOSING BOOKS

Is it important for children to have their own books?

It is important for children at every age to have their own books to enjoy. This shows them that books are a valued part of everyday life.

How can families ensure children have their own books?

Families can

- find another family who would be interested in trading books
- get books at community sales and secondhand stores
- get books at book fairs or from school book orders
- encourage family members to give books as gifts
- obtain library cards and borrow books

How do families know which books are suitable for children?

Understanding children at different stages will help families choose appropriate books.

Birth to Age 2

Babies learn by using their senses to explore the world. By age two children can name objects and share their ideas. It is important to

- choose colourful picture books
- use board, plastic or cloth books
- choose books that encourage children to use their senses of hearing and touching
- choose books that encourage actions like clapping

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Ages 3-5

From ages 3-5, children are usually energetic and curious about their world and are increasing their understanding of language. It is important to

- choose books that can be read in one sitting
- have children take part by naming, touching and pointing
- read stories that repeat catchy phrases, rhyme or repeated parts
- begin using books about counting, colour, shapes, and the alphabet

Ages 6-8

From ages 6-8, children usually have good control of language and are able to describe feelings and events. It is important to

- choose all kinds of books such as poetry, fantasy, real life stories, riddles and jokes
- choose simple chapter books with larger print
- consider children's magazines

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HOW CHILDREN'S READING DEVELOPS

Do children move through stages in learning to read?

As children move through their pre-Kindergarten to Grade 3 years, they go through various stages of reading development.

Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten (Early Emergent Stage)

At this stage children are becoming aware of, and are developing an interest in, books and print. Children

- realize that print has meaning
- "play at reading", hold a book properly, turn the pages, and make up a story to match the pictures
- know their own name in print
- tell a story from pictures
- notice print in everyday life such as store signs, traffic signs, and food labels



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To help children at this stage, families can

- read to children daily
- say nursery rhymes
- talk about the title and pictures on the cover of a book before beginning to read a story
- point to the words while reading to show that there is a difference between words and pictures
- follow from one line to the next by pointing to show that words go across the page from left to right
- show how reading is enjoyable and interesting by reading themselves
- make children's books available for reading



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Kindergarten to Grade 1 (Late Emergent Stage)

At this stage children often memorize stories they have heard a number of times and match this memory with the written words on the page. Children

- begin to realize the words on a page stay the same
- recognize words they have seen in different places
- develop knowledge of letters
- make the sounds of some of the letters
- print their own name
- retell stories in their own words
- point to words as they are read by someone else



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To help children at this stage of development, families can

- read to children daily
- ask “why” questions as they read such as, “Why is the little boy sad?”
- encourage children to compare what is happening in their lives with what is happening in books
- write a daily message to children
- search for capital and lower case letters
- talk about the pictures and explain that the words on a page tell what is in the picture
- point out the same word in different places in a book



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Grades 1-2 (Early Reading Stage)

At this stage children recognize a number of words. They do this by making sounds for the letters or by remembering the whole word because they have seen it a number of times. Children

- compare what happens in books to their own experiences
- talk about events in a story and give many details
- use pictures to help with reading
- correct mistakes and try different ways to figure out words
- guess what a word might be by thinking about what makes sense
- use sounds to figure out words and use smaller words to help figure out bigger words such as, "and" will help with "stand"



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To help children at this stage of development, families can

- read daily, choosing different types of books
- give children enough time to correct a “mistake”
- help children use different ways to figure out words such as reading to the end of a sentence and going back, putting in a word that makes sense



- ask questions before, during, and after a story such as, “What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that?”
- play word games such as Scrabble

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Grades 2-3 (Transitional Stage)

At this stage children read more smoothly. They have developed a number of ways to figure out unknown words. Children

- think about a topic before beginning to read and while reading
- give details about what has been read
- tell others if they agree or disagree with what has been read and give reasons for why they feel this way
- know if they have made a reading mistake and can correct it
- use patterns they recognize to help sound out longer words such as, "tion" will help with "attention", "ight" will help with "delight"
- use syllables or word parts to figure out longer words



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To help children at this stage of development, families can

- continue to read to children
- encourage children to read to other people
- find simple articles in the newspaper and talk about them
- show how to tell the important parts of a story or article once it has been read
- encourage the reading of longer books
- talk about the meaning of more difficult words



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HELPING WITH READING HOMEWORK

How can families help children read books from school?

How you help children read books depends on their stage of development in reading. As children become better readers the help they need changes.

What can families do if a child isn't sure of a word while reading?

It is important for children to know that what is being read has to make sense. When children have difficulty with words

- wait a few seconds and allow the child time to think
- encourage looking at the picture for clues
- talk about what makes sense
- suggest skipping the word and reading on to the end of the sentence to look for other clues
- suggest going back to the beginning of the sentence and re-reading
- ask the child to sound out the word

How can families help children understand the meaning of what is being read?

They can

- talk about the book before beginning to read
- use the pictures to help make sense of what has happened before continuing
- read short sections and talk about what has happened before going on
- ask questions, guess what will happen next, and read to see if the guess was right
- go back and re-read if things become confused

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What if a book seems too difficult?

If a book is too difficult, families can

- read the book aloud and let the child read any parts that are easy
- read a short section aloud and then have the child read it
- have the child read pages a number of times until the reading is smooth
- ask your child's teacher for suggestions



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Read a book and a magazine
Read a newspaper, a
Computer screen
Read, read, read and succeed
Give yourself the reading gift
Give yourself a reading lift
Read, read, read and succeed

Read in your home, read on a bus
Let your imagination
Grow you must
Read, read, read and succeed
Give yourself the reading gift
Give yourself a reading lift
Read, read, read and succeed

Make it the family thing to do
Children, moms, dads, grandparents too
Read, read, read and succeed
Give yourself the reading gift
Give yourself a reading lift
Read, read, read and succeed

Read for information and for fun
Grow your knowledge, let your mind run
Read, read, read and succeed
Give yourself the reading gift
Give yourself a reading lift
Read, read, read and succeed

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Read a graph and a diagram too
Learn the skills that will really help you
Read, read, read and succeed
Give yourself the reading gift
Give yourself a reading lift
Read, read, read and succeed

Read a play and the lyrics of a song
Read and learn, make it lifelong
Read, read, read and succeed
Give yourself the reading gift
Give yourself a reading lift
Read, read, read and succeed





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