

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

South Point Local School District

## Make reading aloud a special family time

Reading aloud as a family can strengthen your child's vocabulary, improve his reading scores—and allow you all to enjoy books and reading together.

For successful read-alouds, follow these tips:

- **Pick a regular time** and stick to it. Some busy families plan to have reading time during breakfast.
- **Read the book** before you read it aloud. You'll be more comfortable reading it aloud if you're familiar with the text.
- **Read books everyone enjoys.** It will show on your face and in your voice if you like the book.
- **Leave them wanting more.** Stop reading when the story becomes exciting and your child can't wait to hear what will happen next.



Source: R. Freedman and S. Frost, "Making the Most of Read Alouds," *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, Illinois Reading Council.

*"A writer only begins a book. A reader finishes it."*

—Samuel Johnson

## Try these tips during writing assignments

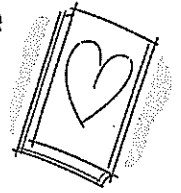
Reading and writing are closely related. Even for great readers, writing assignments can be tough. Good writing involves everything from understanding a subject to knowing how to organize thoughts and checking spelling and punctuation.

When your child has a writing assignment:

1. **Have your child "talk through" some ideas** before starting to write. Clear writing starts with clear thinking.
2. **Encourage your child to take notes** or make an outline before writing.
3. **Offer plenty of praise.** Be specific. Say, "I really like the way you've described what led up to this event."
4. **Don't criticize.** If kids think you always look for what's wrong, they won't want to share their writing with you.
5. **Remember that good writing means more** than correct spelling. Focus first on what your child is trying to say. Later, you can suggest that the piece should be edited.
6. **Be patient.** Good writing takes time!

## Help your child become a fluent reader

*Fluency* is the ability to read smoothly, accurately and with expression. To improve your child's fluency:

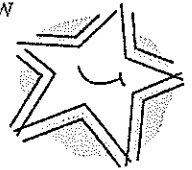


- **Encourage her to listen** to an audio recording of a book while she follows along.
- **Reread favorite books.** Repetition of familiar books improves fluency.
- **Remind your child to pause** between sentences.

Source: "Fluency," Reading Rockets, [nswc.com/fluency](http://nswc.com/fluency).

## Retell fairy tales in unusual ways

Read a favorite fairy tale together. Then, ask your child to change the characters and details to create a new version of the story. For example, how would *The Three Little Pigs* differ if told from the wolf's perspective?



Source: T.A. Young (Ed.), *Happily Ever After: Sharing Folk Literature With Elementary and Middle School Students*, International Reading Association.

## Preview textbooks with your child



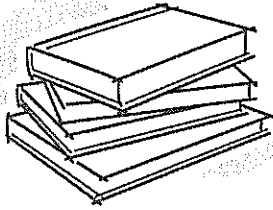
A first textbook is an important milestone for a young reader. When your child brings the book home, preview it together. You can:

- **Look for the author's name** and the date of publication.
- **Read over** the table of contents.
- **See what chapters** look interesting.
- **Look at pictures, graphs, maps** and other illustrations.

Source: "The First Step in Studying a Textbook: Previewing," Cuesta College, [nswc.com/textbookreading](http://nswc.com/textbookreading).

## Encourage your child to keep a list of new words to build vocabulary

Children see and hear new words every day. How can your child remember them all? Ask her to write down new words or words she may not be sure about.



She can make a special section for new words in her school binder. Or she can use a small spiral pad to write down new words. An index card will work, too. Have her keep one in her bookbag during the day.

Writing just the words is okay to start—this saves time. In the evening, your child can look up the new words in the dictionary and add the definitions to her list.

Even if you can explain the meanings quickly, help your child find them in a dictionary—either in print or an online dictionary. Knowing how to use and read a dictionary entry is a useful skill for your child to have.

## Incorporate reading into daily activities

Reading at home is one of the most important things you can do to help your child succeed in school. You can weave reading into many of the activities you already do. Even a reluctant reader may enjoy reading when she:

- **Reads books that are based** on her favorite TV shows or movies. You can also have your child read a book, then watch the movie.
- **Is surrounded by all types** of books, including comic books, cookbooks and more. Visit the library often and encourage your child to check out new reading material.
- **Laughs while she reads.** Have your child read jokes or funny stories aloud.



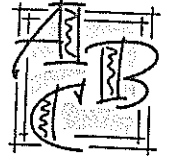
- **Uses websites** such as Storyline Online ([www.storylineonline.net/](http://www.storylineonline.net/)) to interact with books.

Source: "Integrating Reading into Everyday Life for Reluctant Readers," Scholastic.com, [niswc.com/integration](http://niswc.com/integration).

## Play games to review sight words

Sight words are words your child should be able to recognize at a quick glance. To review sight words, play:

- **Bingo.** Make Bingo cards using sight words.
- **Go Fish.** Write sight words on index cards. Use them in place of playing cards.



Source: "Teaching Sight Words—Effective Strategies for Reading Success," K12 Reader, [niswc.com/elemsightwords](http://niswc.com/elemsightwords).

## For lower elementary readers:

- *A Walk in Paris* by Salvatore Rubbino (Candlewick). Join a girl and her grandpa on a walk through Paris. Along the way, learn interesting facts and vocabulary words.
- *Lily the Unicorn* by Dallas Clayton (HarperCollins). Lily the Unicorn loves exploring. Her new friend Roger the Penguin isn't so adventurous. Watch as their friendship develops!



## For upper elementary readers:

- *Bugs: A Stunning Pop-Up Look at Insects, Spiders and Other Creepy-Crawlies* by George McGavin (Candlewick). Learn about bugs' growth cycles and more in this pop-up book.
- *The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp* by Kathi Appelt (Athenium). Raccoons Bingo and J'miah are new to the Official Sugar Man Swamp Scouts, whose job is to help protect Sugar Man, the creature who rules the swamp.



**Q:** My child gets frustrated when she can't read unfamiliar words. What can I do?

**A:** Help her "sound out" the words by blending the letter sounds. You can also pause at the word to ask, "What word would make sense in the story?" A guess based on context may be correct. Be available for your child when she needs help.

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

### Building Readers®

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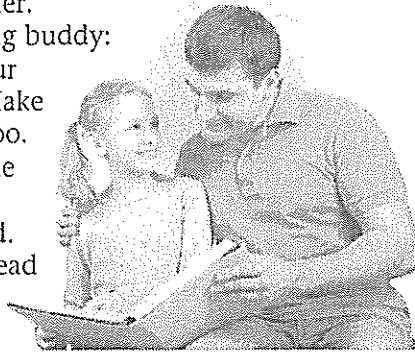
South Point Local School District

## Be your child's reading buddy to boost fluency and comprehension

Some children struggle to sound out every word as they read, which can make it hard to understand what they are reading. Helping your child read more accurately and fluently can make reading easier and more fun for her.

To become your child's reading buddy:

1. **Look for a short passage** that your child would find interesting. Make sure it is at her reading level, too.
2. **Read the passage aloud** while she listens and follows along.
3. **Have her read** the passage aloud. If she has trouble reading it, read it to her again. Then have your child read it after you.
4. **Ask each other questions** about what you read. What was the biggest problem in the passage? Discuss your favorite characters or the most entertaining part. This will help build your child's comprehension skills.



Source: D. Haager and others, *Interventions for Reading Success*, Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

*"I was born with a reading list I will never finish."*

—Maud Casey

## Pumpkins can inspire reading, word play

Now that it's October, pumpkins are everywhere! Make a pumpkin the center of your family reading with books like *The Biggest Pumpkin Ever* by Steven Kroll or *It's Pumpkin Time* by Zoe Hall.

Then, play some pumpkin-related word games! Have fun as a family while you build language skills. Here's how:

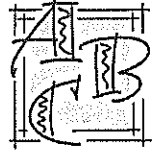
- **Look at a pumpkin.** Who can make the longest list of words or phrases that describe it? (*round, lumpy, orange, future pie, etc.*)
- **Write the word *pumpkin*** on a large sheet of paper. How many smaller words can each person make from the letters in it? (*pump, pin, pink, etc.*)

Whoever has the most words in either activity wins!

Source: "Pump Up the Curriculum with Pumpkins," Education World, [nswc.com/pumpkin](http://nswc.com/pumpkin).

## Decoding strategies help your child figure out words

Students are expected to develop decoding skills in order to figure out tricky words. These skills include sounding out words. Have your child try these strategies:

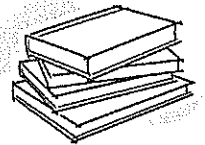


- **Say parts of a word** slowly and then blend them together.
- **Try different sounds** for the same letters.
- **Notice familiar beginnings** and endings.
- **Look for smaller, familiar words** within the difficult word.

Source: K. Tankersley, *Threads of Reading*, ASCD.

## Encourage your child to choose reading material

Don't force your child to read something just because you think it's a good book. Instead, let him decide what to read.

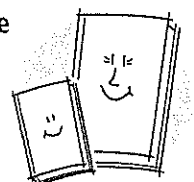


When your child thinks that reading is fun, he will want to do it more!

## Ask reading-focused questions at your parent-teacher conference

When you meet with your child's teacher for parent-teacher conferences this fall, be sure to ask about your child's reading progress. Some good questions are:

- **What is my child's reading level?** What progress have you seen?
- **How would you describe my child's reading?**
- **My child likes reading \_\_\_\_\_.** Do you have suggestions for other books she'll like?

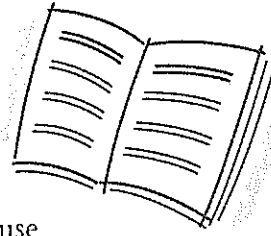


Source: "The Parent-Teacher Conference," Reading Rockets, [nswc.com/readingconference](http://nswc.com/readingconference).

## Give your child tools to assist with reading for a research project

When children are assigned research projects, they have to do lots of reading. To make this type of reading productive:

- **Look at the research together.** Visit the library to find books about your child's topic. Practice using the table of contents, section headings and index.
- **Supervise online research** and review how to use sources. For instance, it's not okay to "cut and paste" words into a project. Your child must quote directly or put things in his own words and list his sources.
- **Provide supplies** such as sticky notes or bookmarks to save pages. Your child can use index cards for jotting down key information.



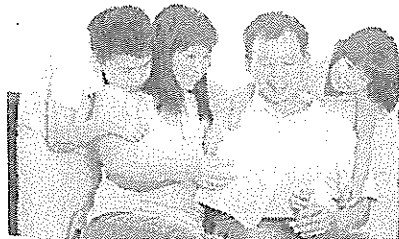
Source: L.K. Rath, Ed.D. and L. Kennedy, *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, HarperCollins.

## Read alouds should be consistent and fun

Reading aloud is a great way to expose your child to the joys of reading. Read-aloud time allows children to enjoy books that might be too challenging to read on their own.

For successful read alouds:

- **Do it every day.** When you read aloud daily, you show that reading time is too important to miss.
- **Pick a regular time.** Making reading part of your routine makes it easier to fit it into a hectic day.
- **Read the book before** you read it aloud. Previewing a book may keep you from getting bogged down in a book that neither you nor your kids enjoy.
- **Read a variety of books** that you and your kids find fun.
- **Leave them wanting more.** Stop your day's reading at a point where your kids are eager to hear what happens next.



Source: R. Freedman and S. Frost, "Making the Most of Read Alouds," Illinois Reading Council Journal.



**Q:** My elementary schooler says she doesn't like to read. What can I do?

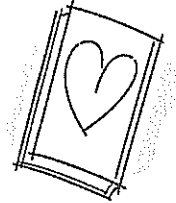
**A:** In the early grades, children are still learning how to read. This is harder for some children than others, and they can become frustrated. Rather than pushing your child to practice reading, show her that reading can be fun. Provide books and magazines about your child's interests. And set an example by reading yourself!

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Find various materials to read

Reading doesn't only take place in books. Show your child that there are many different things to read—all of which are enjoyable! Encourage your child to:

- **Read newspapers** and magazines.
- **Do crossword puzzles.**
- **Read maps and atlases.**



## For lower elementary readers:

- *The Promise* by Nicola Davies (Candlewick). A young girl makes a promise to an old woman to plant a sack of acorns—and as she plants them around the city, the girl's entire world changes.



- *Rubia and the Three Osos* by Susan Middleton Elya (Hyperion). This take on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* includes Spanish vocabulary—and a surprising twist at the end!

## For upper elementary readers:

- *Grandma Chickenlegs* by Geraldine McCaughrean (Carolrhoda). When Tatia's stepmother sends her to get a needle from Grandma Chickenlegs, the evil woman traps the girl in her cottage. This traditional folktale is accompanied with beautiful illustrations.
- *The Big Bad Wolf Goes on Vacation* by Delphine Perret (Sterling). Louis is best friends with the Big Bad Wolf, who has never been to the beach before. When Louis' grandpa comes to take him to the beach, the big Bad Wolf comes along.

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