

Reading Tips for Parents

No Child LEFT BEHIND

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HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD BE READY TO READ AND READY TO LEARN?

- Talk to your infant and toddler to help him learn to speak and understand the meaning of words. Point to objects that are near and describe them as you play and do daily activities together. Having a large vocabulary gives a child a great start when he enters school.
- Read to your baby every day starting at six months of age. Reading and playing with books is a wonderful way to spend special time with her. Hearing words over and over helps her become familiar with them. Reading to your baby is one of the best ways to help her learn.
- Use sounds, songs, gestures and words that rhyme to help your baby learn about language and its many uses. Babies need to hear language from a human being. Television is just noise to a baby.
- Point out the printed words in your home and other places you take your child such as the grocery store. Spend as much time listening to your child as you do talking to him.
- Take children's books and writing materials with you whenever you leave home. This gives your child fun activities to entertain and occupy him while traveling and going to the doctor's office or other appointments.
- Create a quiet, special place in your home for your child to read, write and draw. Keep books and other reading materials where your child can easily reach them.
- Help your child see that reading is important. Set a good example for your child by reading books, newspapers and magazines.
- Limit the amount and type of television you and your child watch. Better yet, turn off the television and spend more time cuddling and reading books with your child. The time and attention you give your child has many benefits beyond helping him be ready for success in school.
- Reach out to libraries and community and faith-based organizations. These organizations can:
    - ★ Help you find age-appropriate books to use at home with your child;
    - ★ Show you creative ways to use books with your child and other tips to help her learn; and
    - ★ Provide year-round children's reading and educational activities.





HOW DO I KNOW A GOOD EARLY READING PROGRAM WHEN I SEE ONE?

- Every teacher is excited about reading and promotes the value and fun of reading to students.
- All students are carefully evaluated, beginning in Kindergarten, to see what they know and what they need to become good readers.
- Reading instruction and practice lasts 90 minutes or more a day in first, second and third grades and 60 minutes a day in Kindergarten.
- All students in first, second and third grades who are behind in reading get special instruction and practice. These students receive, throughout the day, a total of 60 extra minutes of instruction.
- Before or after-school help is given to all students beyond first grade who need extra instruction or who need to review skills. Summer school is available for students who are behind at the end of the year.
- Reading instruction and practice includes work on letters, sounds and blending sounds. Students learn to blend letters and sounds to form new words.
- Learning new words and their meaning is an important part of instruction.
- Students have daily spelling practice and weekly spelling tests.
- The connection between reading and writing is taught on a daily basis. Students write daily. Papers are corrected and returned to the students. By the end of second grade, students write final copies of corrected papers. Corrected papers are sent home for parents to see.
- All students are read to each day from different kinds of books. Students discuss what they read with teachers and other students.
- All students have a chance to read both silently and aloud in school each day and at home every night.
- Every classroom has a library of books that children want to read. This includes easy books and books that are more difficult.
- The school library is used often and has many books. Students may check books out during the summer and over holidays.

SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR CREATING STRONG READERS

Without doubt, reading with children spells success for early literacy. Putting a few simple strategies into action will make a significant difference in helping children develop into good readers and writers.

Through reading aloud, providing print materials, and promoting positive attitudes about reading and writing, you can have a powerful impact on children's literacy and learning.

- Invite a child to read with you every day.
- When reading a book where the print is large, point word by word as you read. This will help the child learn that reading goes from left to right and understand that the word he or she says is the word he or she sees.
- Read a child's favorite book over and over again.
- Read many stories with rhyming words and lines that repeat. Invite the child to join in on these parts. Point, word by word, as he or she reads along with you.
- Discuss new words. For example, "This big house is called a palace. Who do you think lives in a palace?"
- Stop and ask about the pictures and about what is happening in the story.
- Read from a variety of children's books, including fairy tales, song books, poems, and information books.

Reading well is at the heart of all learning. Children who can't read well, can't learn. Help make a difference for a child.





THE FIVE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF READING

Reading with children and helping them practice specific reading components can dramatically improve their ability to read. Scientific research shows that there are five essential components of reading that children must be taught in order to learn to read. Adults can help children learn to be good readers by systematically practicing these five components:

- Recognizing and using individual sounds to create words, or **phonemic awareness**. Children need to be taught to hear sounds in words and that words are made up of the smallest parts of sound, or phonemes.
- Understanding the relationships between written letters and spoken sounds,or **phonics**. Children need to be taught the sounds individual printed letters and groups of letters make. Knowing the relationships between letters and sounds helps children to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically, and "decode" new words.
- Developing the ability to read a text accurately and quickly, or **reading fluency**. Children must learn to read words rapidly and accurately in order to understand what is read. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. When fluent readers read aloud, they read effortlessly and with expression. Readers who are weak in fluency read slowly, word by word, focusing on decoding words instead of comprehending meaning.
- Learning the meaning and pronunciation of words, or **vocabulary development**. Children need to actively build and expand their knowledge of written and spoken words, what they mean and how they are used.
- Acquiring strategies to understand, remember and communicate what is read, or **reading comprehension strategies**. Children need to be taught comprehension strategies, or the steps good readers use to make sure they understand text. Students who are in control of their own reading comprehension become purposeful, active readers.



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. This new law represents his education reform plan and contains the most sweeping changes to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* since it was enacted in 1965. It changes the federal role in education by asking America's schools to describe their success in terms of what each student accomplishes. The act contains the president's four basic education reform principles:

- Stronger accountability for results;
- Local control and flexibility;
- Expanded options for parents; and
- An emphasis on effective and proven teaching methods.

In sum, this law—in partnership with parents, communities, school leadership and classroom teachers—seeks to ensure that every child in America receives a great education and that no child is left behind.

For more information about *No Child Left Behind*, or to sign up for *The Achiever* newsletter full of announcements, events and news, visit www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov. For questions about the U.S. Department of Education and its programs, call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

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