

What kids can do to help themselves

- Play with magnetic letters. See how quickly you can put them in alphabetical order while singing the alphabet song.
- Look at written materials around your house and at road signs to see if you can spot familiar words and letter patterns.
- Write notes, e-mails, and letters to your friends and family. Represent each sound you hear as you write.
- When you're trying to sound out a word, pay close attention to the print. Try to look at all the letters in the word, not just the first one or two.

What parents can do to help at home

- For a younger reader, help your child learn the letters and sounds of the alphabet. Occasionally point to letters and ask your child to name them.
- Help your child make connections between what he or she might see on a sign or in the newspaper and the letter and sound work he or she is doing in school.
- Encourage your child to write and spell notes, e-mails, and letters using what he knows about sounds and letters.
- Talk with your child about the "irregular" words that she'll often see in what she's reading. These are the words that don't follow the usual letter-sound rules. These words include *said*, *are*, and *was*. Students must learn to recognize them "at sight."
- Consider using computer software that focuses on developing phonics and emergent literacy skills. Some software programs are designed to support children in their writing efforts. For example, some programs encourage kids to construct sentences and then cartoon characters will act out the completed sentence. Other software programs provide practice with long and short vowel sounds and creating compound words.

Tips For Reading to Your Child

As Barbara Bush wrote recently, "*Above all, children love to be read to. It is a special time for them to be close to the grown-ups who care for them, and a wonderful way to feel loved.*" (Bush, 1993)

- Read often to your child and have fun.
- Snuggle when you read.
- Don't skip your regular reading time.
- Read and reread stories requested by children.
- Make predictions (child tells what he/she thinks will happen next).
- Enjoy the illustrations.
- Talk about the authors and illustrators of the books you read.
- Be patient while your child is reading aloud.
- Listen to books on tape.
- Have your child read into a tape recorder once a month and share the progress with him/her.
- Read aloud together with your child.
- Leave out a word or phrase on each page. (Ex. Little Red Riding Hood said, "Oh, what big sharp _____ you have, Grandma!")
- Have your child think of a new ending to the story.
- When reading a non-fiction book, ask your child what they know about the topic and what they want to learn.
- Discuss similarities and differences between stories. (Great with Fairy Tales)

- Alternate reading. You read a page, your child reads a page ,etc.
- From time to time, invite other adults or older children to listen in or join in reading aloud.
- When you read, involve your child by having him/her point out objects in the pictures and follow the words with his/her finger.
- Read poems to/with your child.
- Read children's magazines.
- Echo Read: Choose something fun to read, such as a poem, song, or joke. You read a sentence with expression and ask your child to repeat the phrase after you.
- Check out the public library.
- Create a special place for your child's books in your home.
- Keep a few "old favorite" books in the car to enjoy.

Phrases That Encourage

The following are statements you can use to help encourage your child while he/she is reading.

I like the way you tried to help yourself.

Good for you! I saw you checking the word with the picture to see if you were right.

I like the way you worked out the hard part.

I noticed you tried _____ when you had trouble. Good for you. That's what good readers do.

I noticed you paused before you read right here (point). After you paused, you read the word correctly. Great job!

I'm so proud of your efforts and skills.

I love the way you read this sentence with feeling.

You are reading with lots of expression. I'm really proud of you.

I like the way you got your mouth ready and said the first sound.

QUESTIONS FOR READING

Below you will find a list of possible questions to help you with conversations about your child's reading. They are not intended to be used all at once or every time you read with your child. Use them at your discretion and where they are appropriate. Happy Reading !!

Questions to ask before you read

- Can you look at the pictures and predict what you think will happen in this book?
- What makes you think that?
- What characters do you think might be in our story?
- Do you think there will be a problem in this story? Why or why not?
- Does the topic/story relate to you or your family? How?

Questions to ask during the reading

- What do you think will happen next?

- What can you tell me about the story so far?
- Can you predict how the story will end?
- Why do you think the character did _____?
- What would you have done if you were the character?
- How would you have felt if you were the character? (use different characters)
- As I read _____, it made me picture _____ in my head. What pictures do you see in your head?
- As you read, what are you wondering about?
- Can you put what you've just read in your own words?
-

Questions to ask after reading

- Can you remember the title?
- In your opinion, was it a good title for this book? Why or why not?
- Were your predictions about the story correct?
- If there was a problem, did it get solved?
- What happened because of the problem?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- What is the most important point the author is trying to make in his writing?
- What was your favorite part of the story?
- If you could change one thing in the story, what would it be?
- Can you retell the story in order?
- If you were _____, how would you have felt?
- What is the most interesting situation in the story?
- Is there a character in the story like you? How are you alike?
- Why did you like this book?

Phonemic Awareness Activities for 4-5-6 Year Olds

Research has shown repeatedly that phonemic awareness is a powerful predictor of success in learning to read. (Reading Program Advisory: Teaching Reading pp. 4-5)

What is it?

- the understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds
- (called phonemes)
- the ability to hear individual sounds in words
- the ability to manipulate sounds in words orally

In Irvine Unified School District, support for phonemic awareness development occurs in Kindergarten and first grade and includes the abilities to:

- sing nursery rhymes and songs including playful songs
- play rhyming games
- play with magnetic letters
- use physical responses such as clapping and tapping to demonstrate patterns in song, stories, and words
- separating words into separate sounds
- participating in word play where children change beginning, middle, and ending sounds
- blending letters when learning common spelling and sound patterns
- decoding big words by decoding smaller words or word parts within them

Guidelines for Use of Following Activities

Attached you will find a "developmental" list of activities to reinforce what is happening in your child's classroom. We hope this is a positive and fun one-on-one time with your child.

These activities are intended to be done orally and for short periods of time (5-7 min.) repeatedly in every day life. Examples: in the car, in the bath, waiting for appointments, car wash, in line, etc...

Listening Awareness

Have child close eyes and listen for three sounds you make.

Ex: Parent claps hands, snaps fingers, and stomps feet.

Child opens eyes.

Parent says, "First you heard _____."

In the middle you heard _____. And last you heard _____."

Child fills in blank.

Continue listening game using the following:

- animal sounds (moo, oink, quack)
- color words
- familiar items (tree, grass, truck)
- letters of alphabet
- sounds of alphabet "b-a-t"

Rhyming Awareness

Read and teach your child *Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes*

Substitute rhyming words.

Ex: *Hickory, dickory, dock*

The mouse ran up the clock.

Child changes clock to a rhyming word such as "sock".

Continue above substitute rhyming with multiple nursery rhymes and Dr. Seuss books, and any other rhymes/songs your family knows. (See attached book list for book ideas.)

Word and Syllable Awareness

Play ‘Word Clap’. Parent says "Sailboat."

Child says (while clapping), "Sail...boat" (claps two times for the two parts)

Sample Words:

playground sandbox crayons chair friend classroom

paint paper kitchen bedroom bathroom computer

If your child has mastered 2 syllable (part) words, try 3 syllables.

Play ‘What’s the Word’ Game

This time parent says a word in parts and the child repeats the entire word.

Example:

Parent: "di..no..saur"

Child: "dinosaur"

Parent: "al..pha...bet"

Child: "alphabet"

Parent: "tel...e...vi...sion"

Child: "television"

Again, you can make this more difficult with words with more syllables when your child is ready.

Word Family Awareness

Choose a word family to practice.

Parent says, "C...at. What’s the word?"

Child says, "Cat."

Continue with the same word family to reinforce rhyming, vowel patterns and sound blending.

Example:

at an it en ot ake ane ole

cat ran bit hen dot cake plane sole

sat fan hit pen cot sake cane whole

bat man sit ten tot rake lane mole

fat clan fit men lot make mane pole

Table of Consonants, Vowels, & Word Families

Consonants:

b d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x z

Vowels:

a e i o u sometimes y

Short Vowel sounds:

a e i o u

cat pen it top cup

Long Vowels say their own names:

Long "a" "e" "i" "o" "u"

cake me tie no cute

say meet wife poke hue

train eat night boat cue

Nearly 500 rhymes can be derived from the following 37 rhymes:

-ack -ain -ake -ale -all -ame

-an -ank -ap -ash -at -ate

-aw -ay -eat -ell -est -ice

-ick -ide -ight -ill -in -ine

-ing -ink -ip -ir -ock -oke

-op -or -ore -uck -ug -ump

Ten Tips: Helping Your Child Read Effectively

CHOOSING A BOOK

- 1. Too Easy.** Ask your child to select a book and read. If two or three pages can be read without mistakes, ask the child to find a more difficult book to read.
- 2. Too Hard.** If the child makes three mistakes per page, it may be too difficult and frustrating. Find an easier book for your child to read. HOWEVER, if the story and ideas seem very interesting to him/her, don't worry about the number of words not understood or recognized.
- 3. Just Right.** Ask your child to read silently for several pages, then ask, "Please explain what you have just read," with the book closed. If your child can give you a brief idea of what the story is about, then he/she is reading and understanding the materials. If the child cannot understand or recall the story, then you know he/she has poor reading comprehension.

IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING

- 4. Reading For Understanding.** Children may be able to read the words, but often do not understand what the words mean. Helping them understand the world about them by talking to them about the things they see and use will improve their understanding of words. This may mean using difficult vocabulary and explaining what the words mean.
- 5. Improve Reading Understanding.** Watching television and talking over the plot or talking about advertising, billboards and signs as you are driving down the street are ways of improving your child's reading comprehension. He/she will have a better understanding of what is heard, seen, and sensed.

HELPFUL TIPS

- 6. Make Reading Useful.** Give your child tasks to do that are within his/her reading ability. Examples: reading the road map on trips, ordering from a menu, reading the directions for assembling a model, or reading advertising.
- 7. Reading To Children.** Reading is not meaningful until the child wants to read. The child will want to read when he/she sees other family members acquiring useful information through reading. Reading to a child stimulates seeking more resources for reading.
- 8. Reading For A Purpose.** There needs to be a reason for reading that is child-centered. Reading directions for model cars, airplanes, boats, doll houses, etc., recipes, "how-to" books, or repair manuals needs to go beyond just reading. The child must interpret what is read and then experience the results.
- 9. Develop Speaking Skills.** Speaking in complete sentences to express ideas in a logical order is important too. Helping your child organize spoken ideas also helps him/her learn to read and write. Most children learn to tell others their ideas before they can read.

CAUTION:

- 10. Don't Go To Extremes.** Reading, like speaking, is a tool that should be comfortable to use. It is a method used to transmit information and to transport yourself mentally, using words as images, to other times and places. Make reading fun. Read jokes. Read comedy. Read fiction and non-fiction. Read a variety of material

Breaking The Sound-It-Out Barrier

What is reading?

Reading is understanding what the printed words mean.

For children to become strong, independent readers, they must use a variety of strategies to figure out unknown words. By doing this, good readers are able to understand what is written on a page.

What are the strategies good readers use?

- Good readers use the knowledge they have in their head to help them make sense of reading
For example, good readers would figure out that the underlined word in the sentence, "Mary likes to ride her horse on Saturday," is horse, not house. A good reader knows that a person would ride a horse, not a house.
- Good readers also use the way sentences are put together to figure out what sounds right.

For example, good readers would know that the underlined word in the sentence above would not be horrible, because "Mary likes to ride her horrible on Saturday," wouldn't be a word that would fit in that sentence.

- Good readers use what they know about the sounds of letters and groups of letters to help them figure out words.

For example, good readers would look at horse and be able to see that the sounds of the letters would be h-or-s.

By using all three strategies, good readers are able to read and understand written language.

How can parents help?

Parents can help their children learn to use the following process to figure out unknown words. This process encourages the use of all three strategies

When children are stuck on a word they don't know, have them:

- Look at the picture and think about the story.
- Go back and read from the beginning of the sentence. When they get to the unknown word, have them say the beginning sound and slide to the end of the word.
- Read on to the end of the sentence.
- Go back and try saying the word.

Ask:

"Does it make sense?"

"Does it sound right?"

"Do the letters match the sounds?"

If the answers are yes, go on reading. If not, go back and try the process again.

What else?

Try not to interrupt your child if the error he or she makes does not change the meaning of the text. For example, if your child substitutes home for house in the sentence, "Let's go to her house," the meaning is unchanged. Those interruptions only promote the idea that reading is saying words correctly rather than getting the meaning.

When your child uses good strategies, compliment him or her for thinking and for making sense of what is being read. After all, that is what reading is all about.
