

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Westview Elementary School
Mr. Alan Buttimer, Principal

Include reading in your family's New Year's resolutions

The new year offers an opportunity to think about the past and set goals for the future. This includes family reading goals!

Take time with your child to talk about books or stories you've enjoyed in the past year. If the books are nearby, look through them together. Have your child choose her three favorites. Ask, "What was the best part of this story? Why?"

Or, "What is your favorite picture in this book?"

Discuss future reading plans. Are there ways you can refresh or improve your reading habits? Could you read more often? Could you read new things together, such as children's magazines?

Build daily reading time into your family's schedule. Make 2016 your family's best year ever for reading new and exciting materials!



"Reading brings us unknown friends."

—Honoré de Balzac

Encourage your child to be a book critic

Suggest that your child keep a list of all the books that she reads. She should include the title of each book and its author. She can also create a rating system with numbers or smiley faces. Encourage her to write a short review of each book as well.

Offer your child sentence starters to help with her reviews, such as:

- **I liked this book** because
- **My favorite part** of this story was
- **I wish the author** would have

Help your child compile all of these reviews into a "Book Review" notebook. Keeping track of completed books will give your child a sense of accomplishment. It will also help her remember which books she liked—which will give her suggestions of what books to read next!

Suggest many ways for your child to enjoy writing

Reading and writing go hand in hand. Have your child try different writing activities. She could:

- **Write about things** she likes to do or things that are happening in her life.
- **Make up new endings** to favorite stories.
- **Write song lyrics** or a script for a movie.



Use the dictionary with your child

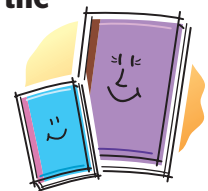
Demonstrate how useful a tool the dictionary is. When your child isn't sure of what a word means or how to spell it, help him look it up! He can use a dictionary online or one in book form. Show him how the dictionary includes the word's definitions, its part of speech and other forms of the word.



Enjoy the benefits of the library as a family

Libraries are wonderful places for children to learn. To make sure your child gets all the benefits of the library:

- **Help him get his own** library card.
- **Schedule regular visits** to the library. Try to go at least once every two weeks.
- **Explore a new section** of the library each time you visit.
- **Look for children's activities** at the library.



Thinking aloud can help build your child's comprehension abilities

One major factor in understanding what you read is *thinking* about what you're reading. When your child thinks about what she is reading, she'll be able to connect the story to other things she knows. Help your child build these comprehension skills by modeling some "think-aloud" strategies:



- **Discuss the book.** Connect it to an experience your child understands. "This story reminds me of the time when ..."
 - **Talk about books** with similar settings, characters or themes. "What other books that we've read does this story remind you of?"
 - **Help your child** see the connection between the story and something similar that may be happening in the real world.
- By talking through your thoughts on the book, you're helping your child learn to make these important connections herself.

Source: J. Gold and A. Gibson, "Reading Aloud to Build Comprehension," Colorín Colorado, niswc.com/thinkingcomprehension.

Review prefixes and suffixes with your child

Help your child learn to look for easily recognizable parts of a word. Teach him that when a word starts with a certain prefix or ends with a particular suffix, he will get a clue to the word's meaning.

- **A prefix is at the beginning** of the word. Adding a prefix to a word changes its meaning. Common prefixes are *bi-*, *hemi-*, *un-* and *in-*.
- **A suffix is found at the end** of the word. It often tells the part of speech, which will help your child understand how that word is being used. Common suffixes are *-tion*, *-ize*, *-able* and *-er*.



Source: "Teaching Word Parts," Annenberg Learner, niswc.com/prefixsuffix.



Q: My child gets frustrated when he struggles to read a word. How can I help?

A: Suggest that he become a reading detective. He can look for clues, such as chunks of the word that he recognizes or nearby pictures. You can also discuss similar words he knows. Sometimes it helps to reread the sentence or to skip the troublesome word and keep reading. Then say, "What word would make sense there?"

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

Read and write about science experiments

Hands-on learning is a fun way to improve reading and writing skills.



Look for books at your library that contain science experiments you and your child can do at home.

Then, read the directions, gather materials, write predictions and conduct the experiment together. Have your child take notes on the outcome.

For lower elementary readers:

- ***Stalling*** by Alan Katz (Margaret K. McElderry Books). Even though it's time for bed, Dan has plenty of things to do. He devises several ways to stall bedtime for just a few more minutes.



- ***The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*** by Mordicai Gerstein (Square Fish). In 1974, Philippe Petit had a dream to walk on a tightrope between the World Trade Center towers.

For upper elementary readers:

- ***The Road to Oz: Twists, Turns, Bumps, and Triumphs in the Life of L. Frank Baum*** by Kathleen Krull (Knopf Books for Young Readers). Learn all about the life of the famed author of *The Wizard of Oz* including his inspiration for the land of Oz.
- ***Moon Runner*** by Carolyn Marsden (Candlewick Press). Mina is nervous when she must start track at school, until she discovers that she loves it—and excels.

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