

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Westview Elementary School
Mr. Alan Buttimer, Principal

Look into summer reading programs at your local library

Has your child joined a library summer reading program yet? In addition to being fun, research shows that kids who participate in library summer reading programs tend to keep their reading skills strong. Keep in mind that library programs also:



- **Offer exciting activities.** Your child may participate in a book club, do art projects and meet authors.
- **Encourage the use of all kinds of reading material.** Your child will be exposed to magazines, graphic novels and audio books.
- **Provide motivation in a safe environment.** Library events also give children opportunities to socialize with other readers.
- **Foster good habits,** such as visiting the library often. And once your child finds that she likes summer reading events, she may want to come back during the school year!

Source: "Why is Summer Reading Important?" Madison Public Library, niswc.com/summerlibrary.

"What you don't know would make a great book."

—Sydney Smith

Keys to choosing irresistible books

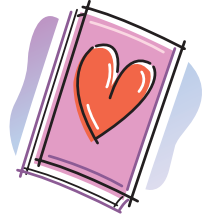
Summer is a great time to read the same book as your child—and to have fun discussing it, too. Let your child choose the book you'll read together so that he'll be excited about the idea. Encourage him to pick from books with irresistible elements like:

- **Humor.** Young readers giggle at pictures and wordplay. Older kids understand jokes that play out through dialogue and scenes.
- **Personality.** Look for main characters who are similar to your child in feelings and experiences.
- **Excitement.** Reluctant readers like short chapters with lots of action. Even the first paragraph should be fascinating!
- **Quirkiness.** Sometimes a book's cover draws readers in. Stand-out topics (like "gross bugs") attract readers, too.

Source: L. Backes, "Writing Books for Kids Who (Think They) Hate to Read," *Writers Write, Children's Writing*, niswc.com/elementsofbooks.

Help your child be a confident reader

Confidence is key when building reading skills. To boost your child's certainty with her reading:



- **Ask her to read** out loud to you. Avoid criticism, and praise her efforts.
- **Discuss what she is reading.** Your child will get to be the expert and share what she has learned.
- **Make time every day** to read with her. Practice builds confidence.

Spice up those bookshelves!

Looking for a rainy-day reading activity? With your child, rearrange your family's books in a fun way. Show off gorgeous covers, or add small toys in front of the books. The new look for old books just might inspire more reading.



Children can check their comprehension while reading

Sometimes kids read words but don't understand what they are reading. Encourage your child to stop when a word (or a part of the reading) doesn't make sense.

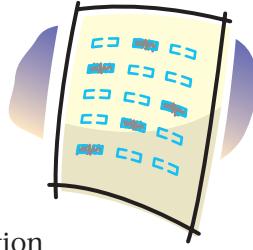


He should look for context clues in the rest of the paragraph or reread that section. If he's still confused when he's finished reading, he should look up unclear words or ask for help.

Source: M. Pressley, "Comprehension Instruction: What Works," *Reading Rockets*, niswc.com/understandingwhatyouread.

Read carefully for test success

Strong reading skills help children answer multiple-choice questions. Share these tips for answering multiple-choice questions with your child:



- **Read them carefully.** Notice key words, such as *who*, *what*, *when* and *where*. Also pay attention to tricky words like *not* and *except* that may change the meaning of the question.
- **Think about the answer.** Before looking at the choices, put the answer in your own words. Then see if an option matches what you were thinking.
- **Read every choice.** If you think you see the answer immediately, still consider all the possibilities. One answer may be more complete than another.
- **Eliminate wrong answers.** Even if you don't know the right answer, you may recognize wrong answers. Cross them off to increase your chances of selecting the correct one.

Source: Princeton Review, *Know It All! Grades 3–5 Reading*, Princeton Review.

Play vocabulary games to learn new words

This summer, introduce your child (and yourself!) to one new word a day. Do it in fun ways that feel more like games than learning. Then be sure to use the words several times to reinforce them. For example:

- **Open a children's dictionary** and pick a random word. Have everyone in your family take a turn guessing its definition before reading the definition out loud.
- **Sign up for** a “word of the day” email. Read the emails together and see who can come up with the funniest sentence using today's word.
- **Read an interesting article** from the newspaper aloud. Choose one unfamiliar word



and look it up. Challenge each other to use it in a conversation!



Q: My child loves hands-on activities but doesn't like to sit and read. What can I do to encourage him to read?

A: Start with a craft or building activity your child enjoys. Choose a project with an illustration but one that also requires the participant to read directions. Missing a step in the directions can affect the final product. Your child will experience first-hand how careful reading can lead to positive results.

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

Innovative app lets children personalize online books

If your child resists reading, consider downloading an app that lets her create and narrate her own books—free of charge. Kids can do all this and more with Little Bird Tales, including sharing stories by email. Be sure to supervise and help when needed. The app can be found at <http://littlebirdtales.com>.



For lower elementary readers:

- **Picture Day Perfection** by Deborah Diesen (Abrams Books for Young Readers). A boy tries his hardest to make picture day great, but between a bad hair day and a wrinkly shirt, his efforts don't go exactly as planned.
- **Cinderella's Stepsister and the Big Bad Wolf** by Lorraine Carey (Nosy Crow). In this twist on the fairy tale, Cinderella has a third stepsister, who turns out not to be as evil as the others!



For upper elementary readers:

- **Pay It Forward** by Catherine Ryan Hyde (Paula Wiseman Books). Trevor receives an assignment to do good deeds for three people—who must pay those good deeds forward to three more people.
- **Counting Lions: Portraits from the Wild** by Katie Cotton (Candlewick Press). Beautiful charcoal drawings accompany poems about vulnerable animals.

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