

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Westview Elementary School
Mr. Alan Buttimer, Principal

Ask questions to get your child thinking and talking about reading

It is critical that your child read over the summer. Help her reflect on what she reads and improve her comprehension by asking a lot of questions! You might ask:

- **Who were the main characters?**
What did you like or dislike about them? Do they remind you of people you know? How?
- **What happened in the story?**
How did it start? What happened in the middle? How did it end? Were you happy with the way the book ended?
- **Have you ever experienced** something that happened to the characters in the story?
- **What would you change** about the book if you were the author? What plot would make a good sequel?



“Books are a uniquely portable magic.”

—Stephen King

Help your child improve reading habits

There is no such thing as too much reading—it just has to be done responsibly! Here are three common reading problems followed by easy ways to turn them around:

1. **Tattered books.** Choose a special spot for books where they won't get trampled—like a basket or a shelf.
2. **Overdue library books.** Set a weekly schedule to visit the library with your child. Make sure he returns items on time. Then have fun browsing for new material to check out.
3. **Late night reading.** On school nights, tuck him in early so he has time to read in bed before lights out. On occasional weekend nights, it's OK to let your child stay up later to read.

Source: “Breaking Bad Reading Habits,” Scholastic, niswc.com/improving-reading_habits.

Keep your child reading over the summer



If your child needs some encouragement to keep reading over the summer, do what you can to make reading appealing. Suggest that he read:

- **A series of books**, like Magic Treehouse or Nancy Drew.
- **A joke book.** Ask your child to find the funniest one he can.
- **A “choose your own adventure” book.** Your child may enjoy creating his own path as he reads.

Source: M. Leonhardt, *Keeping Kids Reading: How To Raise Avid Readers in the Video Age*, Crown Publishers.

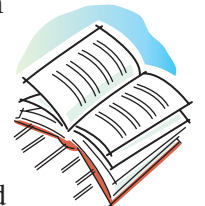
Enjoy reading aloud to your child

Your child benefits many ways when you read aloud, even if she is able to read on her own. You can expose your child to new concepts and words. And reading aloud is an opportunity to spend quality time together.



Task your child with being the family fact checker

To help your child engage with reading, give him the job of being your fact checker. When you have a question about something, ask him to get the facts. If you need to double-check an ingredient in a recipe, ask him to read it to you. If you want to know the capital of Bulgaria, have him look it up. He'll have to read to find out!



Use newspapers to inspire reading games

Spice up your regular reading routine by reading a newspaper or magazine—either in print or online—and playing a few games.

You can:

- **Recreate cartoons.** Read a comic strip with your child. Then cut apart the squares. Can she put them back in order? Or, rearrange the squares and create a story together to go along with the new order.
- **Go on a scavenger hunt.** Make a list of things for your child to find in the pages. She might look for a food coupon, a sports statistic, one of her spelling words and the name of your town.
- **Retell stories.** Read a short, simple (and interesting!) article aloud. Encourage your child to summarize what it says. Then switch roles with a new story.



Source: “Fun Ways to Encourage Your Children to Read,” Family Works, University of Illinois Extension, niswc.com/newspaper_games.

Plan family reading activities this summer

Get the whole family involved in reading this summer by planning exciting reading events. Here are some to try:

- **Trivia night.** Choose a book that everyone in your family can take turns reading. Or, read a short book together. Then, have each person write three trivia questions about the story. Take turns quizzing each other. Who remembers the most?
- **Themed dinners.** What do the characters in your child’s books have for dinner? Base a meal around a favorite book. If the story takes place in another country or time period, help your child



research what to include on the menu.

Source: B. Hyde, “Family Reading Activities,” Old Fashioned Living, niswc.com/reading_night_activities.



Q: When my child has trouble reading, he gets frustrated and says, “I can’t read this!” How can I encourage him?

A: Remind him that every new skill takes practice. Show him examples of books he now finds easy, and remind him that at one time, they were a challenge for him. Reassure him that he is able to learn how to read—and that he will. But it takes determination, patience and hard work!

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

Turn writing mistakes into grammar challenges

Exercise your child’s skills by giving her this sentence to fix: *Can You correct this Sentence!* (Then show her the right answer: *Can you correct this sentence?*) Challenge her to fix other grammatical errors. Include things she’s been learning all year, such as punctuation, capitalization and verb tenses. Throw in a few spelling mistakes, too!



For lower elementary readers:

- ***The Hole Story of the Doughnut*** by Pat Miller (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). Learn how this tasty treat came to be—all because of a boy who was a ship’s assistant cook.



- ***Can I Tell You A Secret?*** by Anna Kang (Harper). A small frog named Monty confesses a big secret: He is afraid of water.

For upper elementary readers:

- ***Little Joe*** by Sandra Neil Wallace (Alfred A. Knopf). Nine-year-old Eli is given a newborn calf he names Little Joe. Follow along as Little Joe grows and Eli learns how to take care of the animal.
- ***Eureka! Great Inventions and How They Happened*** by Richard Platt (Kingfisher). Ever wonder how the hot air balloon was invented? Or the vacuum cleaner? Learn all about inventions and the creative minds that produced them.

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