

# How to Help Your Child Become a Better Reader

## To help your child's oral reading fluency improve:

- Read aloud to your child as often as possible. Use expression and emphasize important words. When you model how good readers sound, your child will learn by your example.
- Give your child opportunities to read short chunks of text: poems, songs, riddles and rhymes.
- Memorize poems or short songs and share them with each other.
- Encourage your child to reread sentences or phrases that do not flow well. Model how to read sentences aloud— how to chunk the words into longer phrases and how to pause at the right places.
- Have children practice reading longer, more complex sentences. Have them take breaths at appropriate spots. This will help them gain stamina as a reader.

## To help deepen your child's reading comprehension:

- During your child's 25 minutes (minimum) of nightly reading, encourage your child to stop periodically and think about what he or she just read—remind your child to “talk back” to the text. This will help your child clarify an understanding of the text. He or she should be able to tell you the book's recent events.
- Ask your child questions that require him or her to think more deeply about the book:
  - Why do you think the character did that?*
  - Why do you think the author put that in there?*
  - What is your opinion?*
  - How would you describe \_\_\_\_\_? Why?*
  - What makes you think \_\_\_\_\_? Why?*
  - What do you think the character will do next? Why?*
  - What do you think that word means? Why?*
- Have a conversation at dinnertime about the books that everyone in the family is reading.

## To help develop a lifetime habit of reading:

\*Read together as a family. Set aside a night or time each week when everyone reads something.

\*Form a mini book club: you and your child can choose a book together; get multiple copies; set a reading schedule that you both will follow; each of you should independently read your assigned pages; and then you and your child should meet regularly to discuss what you've read.

\*On Sunday mornings or some other convenient time, read the newspaper, magazines, or comics together. This teaches children that reading does not have to be assigned, but that it can be spontaneous and fun.

\*Visit your local library at least once a month. There are many new and exciting books on display, and the librarians know a lot about upcoming library events.



# How to Help Your Child Really Enjoy Writing



- Encourage children to write in a writer's notebook whenever possible. Encourage them to record what they observe about their world, questions they have, story ideas that pop into their head. **If they write more at home, then they will begin to think of themselves as writers—not just in school, but everywhere!**
- Try not to comment on spelling, grammar and capitalization issues while children are writing in their notebook. The notebook is for idea-finding; developing and editing for clarity come later in the process. Editing is a critical part of the process, but stopping to think about these mechanics at this stage may prevent writers from getting good ideas down on paper.
- When it comes time for editing (cleaning up the writing), try not to point out your child's errors directly. Instead, try saying, "I see some capitalization errors here. Can YOU find them?" Making children more accountable for fixing their own errors will help them become more careful editors.
- Notice good writing and discuss it. Discuss the author's craft and the rich language that you find in the books that you and your child are reading. Children learn about good writing from good models.
- Encourage children to reread their writing to see whether it makes sense and to determine where to go next. Rereading is a very important habit that good writers possess.
- Ask children about the writing projects that they are working on in school. Ask them what part of the writing process they are in right now. If you are interested in their writing life, they will be motivated to make their writing better!
- Ask children about their strengths as a writer. Ask them what their weaknesses are. This will encourage them to continue to build upon those strengths as well as to focus their efforts toward those areas of improvement.
- Keep a writer's notebook yourself, and share your writing with your child. Children love the fact that you are writing alongside them.

## Math Homework Tips for Parents

- \* Encourage your child to consult his or her assignment book daily for homework.
- \* Follow the progress that your child is making in math. Check with your child daily about his or her homework.
- \* If your child is experiencing problems in math, contact your child's teacher to learn whether your child is working at grade level and what can be done at home to help improve academic progress.
- \* Encourage children to communicate with their teacher when they have questions about, or difficulty with, their math work.
- \* Use household chores (cooking, repair and budgeting activities) as opportunities for reinforcing math learning.
- \* Reinforce that there is more than one way to approach computation and problem-solving: powerful mathematicians who have a deep understanding of what they are doing are both efficient and flexible in their thinking.
- \* Practice math facts anywhere and everywhere.
- \* Check in with your child's teacher and ask what you can do to help. Ask your child's teacher about online and other resources that you can use with your child at home.

Some ideas taken from <http://pediatrics.about.com/>

# How to Help Your Child Not Hate Homework!

To help children have a successful homework routine:

- Encourage children to complete their homework at the same time each day. The routine will help them.
- Set a timer for homework to help children budget their time. After 20 minutes, for example, let them take a break. Then set the timer for another 20 minutes.
- Have homework time before dinner. After dinner, most kids are sleepy and are not as motivated to get their work done.
- Encourage children to have their assignment book open while doing their homework. After each assignment is completed, they should check it off to feel that they have accomplished something.
- Take note of long-term assignments. Help your child plan out what he or she intends on finishing each night.
- Encourage children to pack their backpack the night before with everything that they will need for school the next day. This will avoid last-minute rushing in the morning, and it will ensure that they have everything that they need for class.