

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Joe Walker Elementary School
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Maintain your child's enthusiasm for reading

Even a child who loves reading can lose interest over time. Other hobbies can take up time that she once spent on reading.

To keep your child's passion for reading alive:

- **Use her current interests** as a springboard. You might offer your child a biography of her favorite athlete or singer.
- **Respect her growing maturity.** Share interesting books or articles with your child. You might say, "I just read a great story in the paper. I thought you might want to read it."
- **Show you value her opinions.** Does your child like the book she is reading for English class? What does she think of the main character in the novel she is reading?



Serve the community by reading aloud to others

Does your child enjoy storytelling and reading aloud? He can brighten others' days by reading to them!



Together, research a place in your community where you and your child can volunteer to read aloud to others. Look into day care centers, nursing homes and hospitals. Not only will your child nurture his own love of reading, he'll also be sharing it with others.

Build your child's reading confidence

To be a good reader your child needs to believe she *can* be a good reader. Give her opportunities to show you what she can read. Praise her progress. Above all, let her know you believe she can do it!



Source: "Excellent Reading Teachers: A Position Statement of the International Reading Association," International Literacy Association, niscw.com/confidentreader.

Create homemade greeting cards

Making greeting cards is a creative activity that involves reading and writing.

With your child, make a list of birthdays, holidays and other events. Have your child create a special card for each. He can decorate the front of a folded sheet of paper and write a short message inside.

Encourage him to read cards he sees in stores to get ideas about what to write.

Source: "Encouraging the Young Reader: Grades Three through Six," Read Write Now, niscw.com/greetingcards.



"Whenever you read a good book, somewhere in the world a door opens to allow in more light."

—Vera Nazarian

Use the Internet to research questions

Does your child love to ask questions? Asking questions is an essential part of learning—and finding the answers is a great way to improve research skills.

Help your young reader learn how to locate information, a skill that will be critical to his success on research projects in years to come.

Together, type some questions into Internet search engines—for example, you might research, "Why do zebras have stripes?" But don't stop there. Brainstorm other key words and phrases, such as *animal markings* and *patterns*, that might help in your search.

When using search engines, you can reword your child's questions so that answers are not overwhelming. Too much information can discourage young readers as much as too little. Help your child find his way to the answers he needs.

Follow A-R-C when reading textbooks

Reading a textbook is a lot different from reading a novel. Yet students don't always have the skills they need to get the most from their textbooks. Go over the A-R-C method—Associate, Read, Connect—with your child. She should:

- **Associate.** Before reading, encourage your child to think about what she already knows about the subject. She should skim the chapter, looking at the pictures, headings and words in bold type. Your child can also write down questions she expects to answer as she reads.
- **Read.** Your child should read one section, then stop. Does she understand what she just read? If not, she should go back and reread.
- **Connect.** Have your child go back and answer the questions she brainstormed at the beginning of the chapter. She can also answer the questions at the end of the chapter.



Source: "Mastering Your Textbooks," ProQuest K-12, niswc.com/arctextbook.

Use the dictionary to boost vocabulary



Both you and your child can learn new words and definitions with this activity.

Have your child open a dictionary to any page. Have your child point to a place on it without looking. Then, you should try to define the word closest to where your child pointed. Take turns being the pointer and guesser.

A correct definition equals one point. See who can get to 15 points first.

For lower elementary readers:

- **Chloe and the Lion** by Mac Barnett (Disney-Hyperion). When Chloe gets lost in the woods, an argument breaks out between this book's author and illustrator, who have different views of how the story should end.
- **The Gift of Nothing** by Patrick McDonnell (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers). Mooch wants to give Earl a present. But what can he give when Earl already has everything he needs?



For upper elementary readers:

- **Queen Sophie Hartley** by Stephanie Greene (HMH Books for Young Readers). Sophie is the middle child in a big family, and she's constantly in search of things she can do well.
- **The New Kid** by Mavis Jukes (Alfred A. Knopf). Carson is moving from a small school where he knows everyone to a new town and a new school. Join him for all of the adventures he has in store!

Challenge your child to recall details

Recalling key details is an important part of reading comprehension—understanding what is being read.

Play this game with your child to work on his recall skills:

1. **Collect some magazine or newspaper articles** on topics that interest your child. Let him choose which one to read.
2. **Read a section of the article,** then take turns recalling details from what you read.
3. **Give your child time to think** and restate the details. If needed, help him by asking the five W questions: *who, what, when, where* and *why*.



Players get a point for every detail recalled. The person with the most points wins!

Source: C. Tuttle and P. Paquette, *Thinking Games to Play with Your Child*, Lowell House.



Q: I gave my child a journal, but she doesn't want to use it. How can I encourage her to write in it?

A: Journals are great for building writing skills, but some kids don't want to write about their daily activities and feelings. They may respond, however, to "prompts." Suggest that your child start entries with fun things like, "If I could design a school, I would ..." or "If I could have one superpower it would be ..."

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

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