

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

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## Put a family reading routine in place at the beginning of the school year

Reading with your child every day is one of the best ways to improve her reading skills. Establish a regular reading time at the beginning of the school year, and it will become routine in no time!

Then incorporate reading into your family's daily lives in other ways:

- **Bring books anywhere** your child may need some entertainment (in the car, on the bus, in line at the post office, etc.).
- **Read favorite books** together at the breakfast table before school.
- **Check out new books** from the library regularly. Keep them in a special place.
- **Celebrate what you read.** Have themed book dinners. Hang a paper "reading tree" on the wall and add a leaf for each book your child reads. Or create a paper chain—each link represents a finished book.



## Teach your child 'active' reading strategies

Your child's assignment is to read a passage of nonfiction text. He looks the material over, and he's ready to begin. Help him read "actively," rather than just going straight through without stopping. Active reading involves doing things as part of the reading process.

Remind your child to:

- **Stop and think.** What are the main points? What has he learned? Is anything confusing? How does the material relate to other things that he has learned?
- **Restate what the passage says.** As your child puts things in his own words, he cements them in his memory.
- **Make a list of confusing points.** This will help your child figure out exactly what concepts he needs to ask his teacher to clarify.

## Help your child become a more fluent reader

*Fluency* is the ability to read smoothly, accurately and with expression. To improve your child's fluency:

- **Encourage** her to listen to an audio-book while she follows along in a print version.
- **Reread** favorite books. Repetition improves fluency.
- **Remind** your child to pause for breath between sentences.



## Review sight words with Bingo

Sight words are words your child should be able to recognize at a quick glance. To review sight words, try this twist on Bingo.

Make a bingo card using sight words. Then, have your child read a passage and mark words on her bingo card as she encounters them.



## Preview textbooks with your child

A first textbook is an important milestone for a young reader. When your child receives a new textbook, in print or online, preview it together:

- **Find the author's name** and the date of publication.
- **Read over** the table of contents.
- **See what chapters** look interesting.
- **Look at pictures,** graphs, maps and other illustrations.



## A personal dictionary will help your child increase vocabulary

Your child sees and hears new words every day. How can she remember them all? One way is for her to create a personal dictionary.

Have your child:

1. **Designate a special section** of a binder or a small notebook to use as her personal dictionary.
2. **Write down any new words** that she comes across throughout the day. They can be words she reads or words she hears in conversations or on TV.
3. **Look up the words** in a standard dictionary—either in print or online. Then she can write down their definitions in her dictionary. Don't just tell your child what words means. Looking them up will boost her confidence and reinforce important skills.



## Read-aloud time is special family time

Reading aloud as a family can strengthen your child's vocabulary, improve his reading scores—and allow you all to enjoy books and quality time together.

For successful read-alouds:

- **Pick a time** when your child is likely to be receptive and stick to it. Some families read in the morning rather than at night.
- **Read the book** before you read it aloud. You'll be more comfortable reading it aloud if you're familiar with the text.
- **Read books everyone enjoys.** It will show on your face and in your voice if you like the book.
- **Leave your child wanting more.** Stop reading when the story becomes exciting and he can't wait to hear what will happen next.



**Q:** My child gets frustrated when he can't read unfamiliar words. What can I do to help?

**A:** Help him "sound out" the words by making the sound of each letter, then blending them. Are there letter combinations—like *oo* or *ch*—that make their own sounds? If your child still can't

figure it out, simply supply the word for him and encourage him to move on.

## Make reading more appealing to your child

As kids grow older, reading may become less attractive to them. To make reading irresistible:

- **Create a comfortable** reading spot.
- **Host a book swap** with friends.
- **Let your child stay up** later on weekends to read.



## For lower elementary readers:

- *A Walk in Paris* by Salvatore Rubbino. Join a girl and her grandpa on a walk through Paris. Along the way, learn interesting facts and vocabulary words.
- *Max's Words* by Kate Banks. Max watches his brothers collect stamps and coins, but they won't share. So Max finds something of his own to collect.



## For upper elementary readers:

- *Bugs: A Stunning Pop-Up Look at Insects, Spiders and Other Creepy-Crawlies* by George McGavin. Your child will learn about bugs' growth cycles and more in this scientific pop-up book.
- *The Mummy's Mother* by Tony Johnston. When a mummy family's tomb is disturbed, a boy mummy takes action to find his stolen mother.

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