Elementary School • September 2016

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Pollard School Reading Room
Ms. Tozier

Help your child start the new school year excited about reading

What does it really mean when a child "can't stand" reading? Sometimes it just means he hasn't found the right reading materials yet. Try these ideas to turn your reader from reluctant to eager early in the school year:

- **Offer a variety of materials.** Take frequent trips to the library to give him plenty of options.
- **Be open-minded.** If your child prefers to read magazines or comic books instead of novels, that's OK. What's important now is to help him enjoy reading.
- **Consider your child's interests.** Look for materials on topics he loves.
- **Move on.** If your child is bored by the second chapter of a book, let him pick a new one.

Source: C.A. Quick, Ed.D., "Helping Reluctant Readers," KidsHealth, niswc.com/reluctantreaderroutines.

"The worth of a book is to be measured by what you can carry away from it."
—James Bryce

Look for signs of fluency development

Fluency—the ability to read quickly, smoothly and with understanding of the text's meaning—takes lots of practice to develop. In fact, it isn't a one-time task. A child may read some books fluently, but then try more difficult materials, and need to work on fluency again. Developing fluency is an important step toward reading comprehension.

Your child is developing fluency when he:

- **Recognizes many words** immediately, or on sight.
- **Reads several words in a row** instead of having to pause and sound out each word.
- **Reads with expression** that makes sense with the text.
- **Understands the meaning** of what he's reading.

Source: "What is Fluency?" Busy Teacher's Cafe, niswc.com/fluencydevelopment.

Read-alouds boost vocabulary

A good way to expand your child's vocabulary is to read aloud—especially from books at levels that she understands but might have trouble reading herself. For example, she might enjoy books about space but get frustrated with words like *meteorite*. When you read these words aloud, discuss them. Does the book reveal their meaning? If not, look them up together. Then try to use them at other times.

Have your child write letters to family

Encourage your child to write letters to family members who live far away, then send them in the mail. Suggest that she write about school, activities and friends. Remind your child to ask for a reply—not only will she get mail, she'll also be developing her reading skills.

Music enhances reading skills

Language skills grow when children sing along to their favorite tunes. And rhyming patterns in songs can help boost their memory skills, too. To use music to build reading skills:

- **Read the lyrics** as you and your child listen to a song.
- **Sing favorite songs** together as a family.
- **Listen to music** (and sing along) in the car and while you do chores at home.

Source: L. Woodall and B. Ziembroski, "Promoting Literacy Through Music," niswc.com/literacymusic.

 • Copyright © 2016, The Parent Institute®, www.parent-institute.com

Reading doesn't have to be a solo activity

One of the keys to encouraging your child to read is to make reading appealing! One way to do this is to make it something you do together. You can:

- **Browse together.** Walk through a library with your child and get an idea of what he likes. Suggest books related to those topics.
- **Join the fun.** Take turns reading aloud, especially if a book is challenging.
- **Keep track of progress.** Keep a list of how much your child reads. Praise him for reaching milestones. Show that you're proud!
- **Attend library events together.** Ask about special activities and reading programs.
- **Be inspired by books.** After your child reads a book, do something related to it. For example, you might research or visit a place the author mentioned.

Source: "Fun Ways to Read With Your Child," Great Schools, niswc.com/lovereadingtogether.

Make comprehension a key reading goal

To succeed in school, your child must understand the materials she reads. Here are some simple ways to boost your child's comprehension whether she's reading a comic book or a textbook:

- **Remind your child** to sound out tough words. Review common words so she can recognize them instantly.
- **Build your child's vocabulary.** Introduce new words through experiences, instruction and reading itself.
- **Ask questions** to get your child thinking about how the information relates to what she already knows.
- **Encourage your child** to think about what she reads. She can also make predictions about what will happen next or summarize a section she has read.

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

Q: Even though school just started, I'm worried about my child's reading skills. Is it too soon to contact his teacher?

A: No—the sooner reading struggles are identified, the better. The teacher is still getting to know your child, so your perspective is especially important. Working together gives your child his best chance for success. Be sure to ask the teacher what you can do to help at home.

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

Create a cozy reading area

Help your child create a special place at home to be her reading nook. You don't need a lot of space—just be sure to include:

- **A selection of appealing materials,** such as a shelf or small basket of books.
- **Comfortable surroundings.** Consider a soft chair or a pile of pillows. Don't forget good lighting!

For lower elementary readers:

- ***The Worst Princess*** by Anna Kemp (Random House). Princess Sue is not your ordinary princess. She'd much rather fight dragons than sit alone in a tower!

- ***The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art*** by Barb Rosenstock (Alfred A. Knopf). When Vasya Kandinsky first got his set of paints, he painted along to the music and sounds of the city.

For upper elementary readers:

- ***Emma's Poem: The Voice of the Statue of Liberty*** by Linda Glaser (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children). Learn about Emma Lazarus' inspiration to write the inscription—a beautiful poem welcoming all to the United States—on the Statue of Liberty.
- ***For the Love of Autumn*** by Patricia Polacco (Philomel Books). Danielle has a kitten named Autumn. When Autumn runs away during a storm, Danielle's students work together to help her find her beloved cat.

Building Readers®
How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers
Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.
Editor: Stacey Marin.

Copyright © 2016, The Parent Institute® (a division of NIS, Inc.)
P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3302
www.parent-institute.com