

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Pollard School Reading Room  
Ms. Tozier

## Spend quality time reading with your child

Make reading with your child a daily routine this school year. Your child will benefit from your involvement, and you'll enjoy each other's company! You can:

- **Talk about the books you read.** Ask thought-provoking questions that will get your child thinking. "Do you agree with what the main character did?" "What do you think will happen next?"
- **Give an encore performance.** Your child may want to hear stories again and again—and that's good. The more your child listens to a story, the more she can learn from it.
- **Admire other performers.** Listen to professional storytellers or go to story hours at the library. While there, check out some audio books.
- **Find a time that works for you.** Select a time to read together when your child is most receptive. Make it a part of the day that you both look forward to.



*"A capacity and taste for reading gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others."*

—Abraham Lincoln

## Play Concentration with sight words

*Sight words* are high-frequency words that your child should be able to recognize at a glance without having to sound them out. To help him practice sight words, you can play the fun memory game Concentration:

1. **Make a list** of 10-15 high-frequency words with your child, such as *the*, *which* and *about*. Write each word on two index cards.
  2. **Shuffle the cards** and lay them out face down.
  3. **Have your child pick up two cards** and read the words aloud. If the words match, he keeps them and takes another turn. If the words don't match, he should turn them back over and the next player takes a turn.
- The player with the most pairs wins!

Source: "Concentration," Sight Word Games, [niswc.com/concentration](http://niswc.com/concentration).

## Reread to boost fluency

*Fluency* is the ability to read quickly and effortlessly. A fluent reader doesn't pause to decode words.

Help your child develop fluency by encouraging him to read and reread favorite books. When your child is familiar with the text—and when the story is a little easy—he doesn't have to focus on figuring out what each word is. Instead, he can focus on reading with speed and expression.

Source: "Fluency Matters," Reading Rockets, [niswc.com/rereadfluency](http://niswc.com/rereadfluency).



## Use wordless picture books for writing inspiration

Find a picture book with few or no words, such as some by David Wiesner or Barbara Lehman.

Then, have your child write some text to go with the illustrations. When she's finished, read the adventure together!



## Encourage reading across genres

Not only do good readers read often, they also read widely—they read many different kinds of things. Encourage your child to read a variety of materials, including:

- **Nonfiction texts** about his hobbies and subjects that interest him.
- **Instructions**, how-to guides and recipes.
- **Magazines** and newspapers.
- **Poetry** collections.
- **Biographies** about influential people.
- **Comics** and graphic novels.



## Help your child become immersed in reading

To show your child just how much fun reading can be, suggest that she put herself into the world in which her book takes place. Encourage your child to:

- **Get into character.** Have her read some exciting passages from the book out loud. Remind her to be enthusiastic and dramatic! You can play a role opposite her.
- **Make a map.** She can draw the area where the story takes place. This is great for adventure stories.
- **Design costumes.** Your child can sketch pictures of the type of clothing each character might wear.
- **Invite a character to dinner.** Help her plan a menu the character would like based on what you know from the book.



Source: S.I. Barchers, "75 Ways to Share a Book," [niswc.com/75sharebook](http://niswc.com/75sharebook).

### Ask questions to find the right book

Choosing the right book is an important step for readers. When your child is deciding on a book to read, ask him:

- **Does the title** sound interesting?
- **Is the text** easy to read?
- **How do you feel** about the pictures?
- **Are you "hooked"** after reading the first few lines?



### For lower elementary readers:

- **Peeny Butter Fudge** by Toni Morrison and Slade Morrison (Paula Wiseman Books). A day with Nana includes lots of special things—including making a tasty treat, peeny butter fudge!

- **Turtle's Race with Beaver** by Joseph Bruchac and James Bruchac (Dial Books for Young Readers). Turtle burrows deep into the pond when winter comes. When she resurfaces, she finds that Beaver has moved in, and the pond is quite different.



### For upper elementary readers:

- **Odd Duck** by Cecil Castellucci (First Second). Theodora is a normal duck who lives a very simple life—until a new, odd duck moves in next door.
- **The Universe of Fair** by Leslie Bulion (Peachtree Publishers). All Miller wants is to explore the town fair by himself. When circumstances make that possible, he finds that responsibility is much more than he bargained for.

## Make the most of your family library visits

Your child is never too old for family library trips! When you visit the library with your child, encourage him to choose a variety of materials that include an occasional challenge.

Suggest that he choose:

- **At least one book** that relates to something he's learning about in school.
- **One book** that is slightly difficult—you can read it together!
- **Some books** that are at his reading level and he is able to read easily.
- **A book** from a section of the library he hasn't borrowed from before.

Make sure your child has enough time to browse all



of the available materials at the library.

Source: "I Can Read and Write! How to Encourage Your School-Age Child's Literacy Development," International Reading Association, [niswc.com/elemlibrary](http://niswc.com/elemlibrary).



**Q:** My child's teacher wants students to "think critically" about what they read at home. What can I do to help my child do that?

**A:** All elementary students can practice critical thinking. After your child reads something, ask questions that help her analyze information. For example, "Why did the story have a happy ending?" "Does the book remind you of anything in real life?" "What did you learn from reading it?"

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

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Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.  
Editor: Stacey Marin.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474  
1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3302  
[www.parent-institute.com](http://www.parent-institute.com)