



Discover the magic of reading aloud

For students in primary and junior grades

Reading is love

You are your child's first and most influential teacher. The parent-child relationship that begins with reading aloud can develop into a lifetime of learning together. Here are some tips to help you nurture learning connections with your child.

Find a consistent time, or two

Sometimes it takes a little juggling to find the ideal time to take that reading break with your child. Although many families follow a bedtime reading routine, you or your child might be too tired.

Quality reading requires concentration so think about moving the reading to earlier in the evening. The key is to have a routine that both you and your child can look forward to.

Choose the right books together

Parents should consider their child's interests when choosing books, but they should also consider the book's learning benefits:

- Non-fiction texts build vocabulary and world knowledge.
- Rhymes and poems encourage playing with language.
- Books with predictable patterns give young children the support they need in order to read independently.
- Reading to your child above his reading level helps develop reading vocabulary.
- Re-reading of familiar books builds confidence.

- New versions of old favourites keep the plot lines and characters fresh and interesting.

Add excitement to reading

Here are a few tips to help animate reading:

- Reading slowly can be better. Children's authors read their books slowly and with lots of expression. Check out individual author's web sites to hear their renditions!
- Long descriptions are hard to read aloud. If you own the book, pencil out or bracket these parts and skip them.
- Use toys, food or pictures as props to help read, tell or retell the story.
- Prepare for a second reading with sticky notes beside your favourite sections.
- Sometimes give your fidgety child the opportunity to draw pictures on paper about the story that's being read.
- "Write" yourself and your child into new versions of favourite tales and enjoy performing them together.
- Think big! Take your child beyond the words and into the author's world.

Plan for a lifetime of learning

Great minds don't just happen; they are carefully nurtured within close relationships.

Reading together provides a shared experience for both you and your child. Toddlers who start their reading instruction on their parents' laps associate reading time with loving time.

Young children learning to read on their own need a lot of encouragement and benefit from repeated practice with easy-to-read books. As your child matures, so should his reading material and your discussions about books.

Coaching language

Coaching language encourages thinking at every age. Be a model student and show your child how to learn along with you. Here are some questions and sentence starters to help encourage him to clarify and extend his thinking.

Words that promote shared learning between you and your child:

- That's exactly what I was thinking.
- Oh, now I see what you mean.
- I never knew that...
- I'm not sure. What do you think?
- You're right! How did you figure that out?

Words that help make predictions:

- Let's look at the pictures. I wonder...
- I wonder what would happen if...
- What questions do we have right now?

Words that encourage comprehension:

- Does that make sense?
- Let's make a list of...
- Is there a part you don't understand?
- Are there some words you don't understand?
- I think that part might be important so I'm going to read it again.
- Let's retell the story from the pictures.

Words that confirm comprehension:

- Maybe we can find some clues.
- Well, we now know...
- Let's look at the picture again (read that part again) while we think about your idea.
- Could you tell me more about that?
- What do you mean?

Words that lead to critical thinking and summarizing:

- Do you think that could really have happened?
- Who do you think would like this book? Why?
- Let's think about the moral of the story.
- I think the author wants us to learn...from this story. Let's look for proof.

Words that help make connections:

- Does that remind you of anything? Anyone?
- That character reminds me of you. Remember when you...
- I wonder if we could find some other books about...
- That reminds me of the time we...

Words that encourage playing with words:

- I love the sound of those words. I'm going to read them again.
- Let's clap out the words. Let's walk out the poem. Let's make up a finger play.

This tip sheet was prepared by Karin Milne, Early Literacy Teacher, and Paul Murphy, Teacher.

