



Reading between the lines

Supporting your child's reading development

For students in the primary grades

Learning to read is a process

When a child learns to walk, he goes through certain stages from crawling to standing and finally, that first step. Learning to read is a similar process.

Every child is unique; some move steadily from stage to stage while others take more time. This is true whether a child is learning to walk or to read.



You can make a difference

Just as you helped your child as they learned to talk and walk, there are things you can do as she learns to read. The key to helping your child move smoothly to the next stage is to give her the right kind of support at the right time.



"The task of learning to read is the greatest single effort that the human mind can undertake... Your child cannot do it alone. To become a real reader your child needs you." Paul Kropp, author of *How to Make Your Child a Reader for Life*

Ideas to Get You Started

Before your child learns to read, there are a few things he must be able to do:

- know the letters of the alphabet
- recognize the sounds letters make



- be familiar with how books "work" (for example, reading from left to right, front to back)

Helpful tips for beginning readers

Here are a few helpful tips that will help your child get over the first few reading hurdles:

- Try leaving out the word and finishing the sentence. Now the word will often become clear.
- Ask, "What word would make sense here?"
- Look for a small word you know, e.g. find the word "in" in "inside"
- Try another word that makes sense

Focus on the positive

"Beginners must see themselves as successful before they are capable. Confidence building is the key to reading success." Vera Goodman, author of *Reading is More than Phonics*

Try saying...

- "I like the way you stopped reading when the sentence didn't make sense."
- "I like the book you brought home for us to share."
- "Good reading! That's exactly what you should do."

Give the right help at the right time

Your child is ready to read if you notice that she:

- shows an interest in books and the print around them
- imitates you as you read
- retells stories she has heard
- memorizes favourite stories
- begins pointing to words
- reads some common words (e.g. in a book, on a sign)
- sounds out words she doesn't know
- points to the words being read



Positive encouragement works wonders

To encourage reading, try:

- Reading to your child as often as you can
- Accepting and praising your child's attempts to read
- Talking about the books you read
- Asking your child to interpret the pictures
- Having your child join in with familiar stories
- Setting up a home message board for your child to read and write notes
- Strategies other than sounding out letters
- Giving your child time to correct errors. If the errors make sense, ignore them, e.g. if your child says "house" instead of "home"
- Asking, "What do you think will happen next?"

Reading is more than just sounding out the words

"Efficient readers use strategies that go beyond phonics." Vera Goodman, author of *Reading is More Than Phonics*

Comprehension involves making connections between print and the reader's experiences. Good readers use a variety of strategies to make meaning out of printed text.

To foster reading comprehension consider asking your child the following questions:

- Did the story remind you of anything you know about?
- What did you wonder about while you were reading?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What do you see in your head as you read this?
- What do you understand now that you didn't understand before?



This tip sheet was prepared by Linda Coombes and Karen Fox, Early Literacy Teachers.