

A Parent's Guide to Raising Readers and Keeping Them That Way

This guide was developed to give parents and caregivers some tips to help make their youngsters want to read – and keep on reading.

Tips for Reading to Infants and Toddlers

- Snuggle with your child with her favorite blanket or toys as you read.
- Read with expression using different voices for different characters.
- Emphasize rhythms and rhymes in stories. Give your toddler opportunities to repeat rhyming phrases.
- Use pictures to develop speaking vocabulary by talking about what is shown. Encourage your child to repeat what you say or comment on it.
- Encourage your child to ask questions. Provide models of interesting questions and examples of possible answers. “I wonder what is going to happen next? I think the rabbit will get lost because he is not paying attention to where he is going. What do you think?”
- Look for books that are about things that interest your toddler. For example, does your child like cars, insects, or animals?
- Make reading a habit before bedtime, after lunch, or after naptime.
- Give your child a chance to choose his own books for reading. If your toddler chooses a book that is too long to hold his attention, read some and skip some, discussing the pictures and how they relate to the story.
- Read stories again and again. Your toddler enjoys repetition and it helps her become familiar with the way stories are organized.

Tips for Reading to and with Young Children in School, Kindergarten through Third Grade

- Keep reading to your child even when he can read. Choose books that are too difficult or long for him to read alone.
- Try reading books with chapters and talk about what is happening in the story. Encourage your child to make predictions about what will happen next and connect characters or events to those in other books and stories.
- Talk with your child about which stories she likes best. Ask whether she likes adventure stories, mysteries, science fiction, animal stories, or stories about other children. Encourage her to explain the reasons for her preferences.
- Talk with your child about favorite authors and help him find additional books by those authors.
- Take turns reading a story with your child. Don't interrupt to correct mistakes that do not change the meaning.
- Talk about the meaning of new words and ideas introduced in books. Help your child think of examples of new concepts.
- Enjoy yourself and have fun when you're reading together. The most important thing you can do to help your child become a successful reader is to let him know that you enjoy and value reading.
- Talk with your child about stories using the notions of the beginning, middle, and end of the story to organize thinking and discussion.
- Ask your child to tell why a character took the action that he did. Then ask him what in the story made him come to that conclusion.

Tips for Reading to and with Children in Grades Four through Six

- Take turns reading a book with your child.
- Ask your child to compare a book to another familiar book. How are the characters alike or different? Do the stories take place in similar settings? How are the illustrations the same or different?
- Ask what part of the story or book your child liked best and why.
- Ask if your child liked the ending of the story. Why or why not?
- Ask your child what type of mood the story or chapter in a book creates. Ask how the author created that mood. Was it with words? Pictures? Drawings?
- If your child has read more than one book by the same author, ask how the books are similar or different.

To Promote Reading for All Children

- Set a good example as a reader—read every day at home even if it is a magazine or newspaper.
- Make reading fun—a time that you both look forward to spending together.
- The *Read-Aloud Handbook* is a great resource for reading to children. It was written by Jim Trelease and published by Penguin Books in 1995.

Read Across America: A Year Round Celebration!

Be sure to check out MEA's web site at www.maine.nea.org/dir4/Read_Across.htm for current information on Read Across America plus valuable links to help you help your child to keep the joy in reading.

Other brochures in this series:

- *A Parent's Guide to School Involvement*
- *A Parent's Guide to Supporting School Success*
- *A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Learn to Read*
- *A Parent's Guide to Testing at Your Child's School*
- *A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child with Today's Math*
- *A Parent's Guide to Raising Scientifically Literate Children*
- *How to Help Your Child Get the Most Out of Homework*



Great Public Schools for Every Child