

Reading at Home

How can I help my child...

- a) be a reader and
- b) enjoy reading?

Parents, teachers need your help! In school, teachers will teach your child specific reading skills, but at home there are certain things that you can do to help your child read. Check out the following list to see what you can do. Tackle this list at your own pace, there is no rush! Even if you did not have a positive experience when learning to read, your child can. Here's how you can help:

1. Make reading enjoyable and part of your routine

- Have a positive outlook on reading for your child.
- Do NOT make reading a chore or punishment.
- Pick a space that is comfortable to read.
- Allow your child to choose what they want to read.

2. Model what a reader does

- Demonstrate how to read a book. Show them how to hold the book, how to follow the words, where certain text features are, how to flip the pages from front to back, etc.
- Explain your thinking out loud. How did you figure out the word, picture, or meaning?
- They need to see you as a reader. Do your own reading in front of them.
- Follow with your finger as you read out loud (if you are sitting directly with them).

3. Have a variety of books easily accessible

- Have: fiction, non-fiction texts, books with only pictures, books with pictures and words, books with only words, different levels, different voices, different faces, different ideas.
- Books should be at an arm's reach for your child.
- Cycle out their books (if you want) but keep their favourites out.

4. Don't make assumptions

- Be open to new ideas, outside help, and new ways of learning how to read. Be open to new strategies that your child shows you.
- Ask your child's teacher if you are concerned about anything.

5. Be a cheerleader and a coach

- Encourage your child and build up their confidence. Praise the good things they are doing (and do not nit-pick).
- Give helpful hints, telling them what to do instead of what not to do.
- It's OK to skip some parts or ignore small mistakes as long as they don't become bad habits. Skip correcting small mistakes if it doesn't impact the meaning of what is being read.

6. Talk about reading

- Talk about the process, the content, the main characters, their problems, the setting, and what the story means. Just talk about anything to do with the book.
- Talk about how it relates to real life.

7. Make it authentic and inclusive

- Read words in context.
- Read books with a purpose (educational or for fun is OK).
- Question the content in the book. Use books as a stepping stone for hard conversations or big ideas*.

If you want further description on these ideas check out the "Parents" tab at:

www.primarytotheoryreading.weebly.com

*Big ideas: discussing racism, gender, ability, class, mental health, etc. can happen with younger readers. Introduce these big ideas in small ways and through dialogue when they are first starting to read. This will help when they encounter these ideas themselves because they will have a starting point to formulate their own ideas. Teaching these types of big ideas helps to create more understanding and empathetic people. Don't underestimate the power a good book can have on emergent readers.