How Can I Improve My Child's Reading?
By: Beverley B. Swanson

This advice for parents details what they can do to help preschoolers become readers, and help school-age children improve their reading skills.

Parents are more concerned about their child's progress in reading than in any other subject taught in school, and rightfully so.

In order for students to achieve in math, science, English, history, geography, and other subjects, reading skills must be developed to the point that most of them are automatic. Students cannot struggle with word recognition when they should be reading quickly for comprehension of a text.

Since reading is so important to success in school, parents can and should play a role in helping their children to become interested in reading and in encouraging their growth in reading skills.

What can parents do to help their preschoolers in the learning-to-read process?

Research shows that children learn about reading before they enter school. In fact, they learn in the best manner through observation. Young children, for example, see people around them reading newspapers, books, maps, and signs.

Parents can do a lot to foster an understanding of print by talking with their preschoolers about signs in their environment and by letting their children know they enjoy reading themselves.

When reading to your preschooler, you should run your index finger under the line of print. This procedure is simple and helps children begin to notice words and that words have meaning. They also gain an awareness of the conventions of reading (e.g., one reads from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom; sentences are made up of words; and some sentences extend beyond a single line of print).

Article continued Page 4
Reading is like taking a well-earned holiday...

‘Reading…. Do we really need to know how to read?’  ‘People survive without having to read…’ ‘You can watch it on TV’ ‘Why read for enjoyment?’ ‘…. ‘You can watch a movie or Play Xbox..’

I am reminded of a quote from my childhood ….

‘Read the book ….Why wait for the movie’

Take time to read a book and create your own movie.

Reading is like taking a holiday...

Have you ever stopped and wondered how....
Reading can take you to new places you have not yet discovered or possibly will never see in person ..... Reading can introduce you to different lifestyles, customs and people who live in exotic countries all over the world...
Reading takes you away from the ordinary jobs you do each day and places you in an imaginary world, doing things you would never dream of doing....
Reading is an experience that goes with you wherever you go, it’s a memory created for a lifetime....
Reading provides you with experience you can share with others.....

What trip have you taken lately?
A little bit of adventure slaying dragons, rescuing damsels in distress...
‘Who did it?’ – Mystery in the streets of London, crime fighting in New York..... Science fiction—in a faraway galaxy, life in a future time space continuum.... Romance in a yesteryear time when life was ladies and gentlemen....
Or

Have you popped into someone else’s life and participated in their adventures, discoveries or accomplishments

There are endless possibilities available to all ages when you pick up and read a book

Encourage your child to take a step into the pages of a novel, autobiography, a page of poetry or a factual text on an interesting topic.

In the last newsletter reading was likened to a Muscle that needs to be exercised regularly to ensure success for all students in any reading situation.

This week I encourage you and your family to take a holiday and READ A BOOK!
Helpful hints ....ways parents can help develop the muscle of reading

Take control of the television.
It’s difficult for reading to compete with TV and video games. Encourage reading as a free-time activity.

I read to you, you read to me.
Take turns reading aloud at bedtime. Kids enjoy this special time with their parents.

Read together every day.
Read to your child every day. Make this a warm and loving time when the two of you can cuddle close.

Say how much you enjoy reading.
Tell your child how much you enjoy reading with him or her. Talk about “story time” as the favourite part of your day.

Tell family tales.
Children love to hear stories about their family. Talk about a funny thing that happened when you were young.

Different strokes for different folks.
Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of writing. Some kids, especially boys, prefer non-fiction books.

Being a role model for our children is one of the most important ways we can influence their behaviour and attitudes towards learning.

Kerrith Barwick – Head of Curriculum
CONTINUE .... HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY CHILD’S READING?

What can I do for my school-age child who doesn’t like to read?

In the early elementary years, from first through third grades, children continue learning how to read. It is a complex process, difficult for some and easy for others. Care must be taken during these early years not to overemphasize the learning-to-read process.

Reading for pleasure and information develops reading interests and offers children the opportunity to practice their reading skills in meaningful ways. Parents of PreK-age children should provide reading materials in the home that arouse curiosity or extend their child’s natural interest in the world around them.

By encouraging and modelling leisure-time reading in the home, parents take the most important step in fostering their child’s reading development.

How can reading research information be useful to me, as a parent?

Current research in reading reveals three important considerations for parents and teachers:

Children who read, and read widely, become better readers.

Reading and writing are complementary skills.

Parents are important to children both as role models and as supporters of their efforts.

What does research say about ways parents can help their children with reading?

The following suggestions have been beneficial to many parents:

- Provide a good role model — read yourself and read often to your child.
- Provide varied reading material — some for reading enjoyment and some with information about hobbies and interests.
- Encourage activities that require reading — for example, cooking (reading a recipe), constructing a kite (reading directions), or identifying an interesting bird’s nest or a shell collected at the beach (using a reference book).
- Establish a reading time, even if it is only ten minutes a day.
- Write notes to your school-age child; encourage written responses.
- Ask your child to bring a library book home to read to a younger sibling.
- Establish one evening a week for reading (instead of television viewing).
- Encourage your child in all reading efforts.

References


To become confident and successful readers, students need to be able to choose how and when to use what they know about:

- Words and Sentences
- Different types of text
- Different reading strategies
- The world around them

They also need to have a clear purpose for reading a text, such as to find out when a fete will be start or what the weather will be like on the weekend, and should feel positive about:

- Reading (feeling confident that they can learn to read)
- Exploring a variety of text types
- Taking risks (having a go) within a supportive environment

Successful reader read fluently (smoothly) and comprehend (understand) individual words, separate sentences and the text as a whole.

**HELPING YOU CHILD TO CHOOSE A BOOK....**

Using the simple five finger rule outlined to below will help you and your child choose appropriate books to read.

**Five Finger Test**

To check the reading level of your book, take this simple test:

1) Open the book to the middle and choose any page to read.
2) Read the page. (aloud if possible)
3) Put out 1 finger for every word you do not know or cannot pronounce.
4) If you have 5 fingers out, the book is too difficult to read without help.
5) If you do not get any fingers up, but are reading very slowly and decoding almost every word, you will not enjoy the book.

**Here's the finger guide:**
1 Finger: This book is o.k. for you.
2 Fingers: Still good.
3 Fingers: Could be a bit hard for you to understand.
4 Fingers: Will be too difficult to read and understand.
5 Fingers: Choose another book.
HELPING WITH READING STRATEGIES.....

Reading to a student helps to build early literacy skill and provides opportunities to model the use of a variety of reading strategies.

Young readers need to learn how and when to use particular reading so they can read unfamiliar words, self– correct mistakes and concentrate on ‘reading for meaning’ (understanding the text) rather than just ‘saying the words in the text’ without understanding what the author has written.

Reading Strategies:

• Young readers use the following strategies when reading:
• Draw on expectations about what language and words are likely to be used in a text
• Recognise familiar words
• Use picture clues
• Use sound– letter clues
• Use sentence structure clues (grammar)
• Think about what makes sense
• Use their knowledge of the world—topics and texts.

As you read a book to or with your child:

• Talk about how you use clues in the pictures and word (print) to work out what the text says
• Link the events or information in the book to your child’s experiences
• Point to each word separately, as you read one or two sentences: this shows your child that each word you say is written as a separate word on the page.
• Use exact words to talk about print
• Point out familiar words and sight words
• Model how to use picture clues by pointing to some words that match pictures
• Use the initial or obvious sounds in a word to decode text (work out the sounds, represented by letters, that can be heard as a the word is read out loud.)
• Model how and when to read on and read back—to read on past the unfamiliar word/s and then go back and re read the sentence to help work out the unknown word/s, self-correct and make meaning of the text—ask ‘Does what I am reading make sense?’
• Talk about when a strategy works / does not work well
• Prompt them to try another more useful strategy, if the first strategy did not help them to make sense of the text.

Don’t Know A Word??

What should you do?

1. Look at the pictures.
2. Try to sound out the word.
3. Look at the beginning letters.
4. Look at the ending letters.
5. Look for a smaller word in the word.
6. Skip the word and read the sentence to the end.
7. Try to guess! What word makes sense? Does your guess look like the word you see?
8. Use the words around it.
9. Go back and re-read. Does it sound right?
10. Put another word in its place.
11. Ask a friend or an adult.
12. Look in the dictionary.

Name: ____________________

Make the attached book mark to help your child when they are faced with an unfamiliar word...Keep in the book your are reading.