



How to Promote Your Child's Literacy

Parent Guide for supporting your student at home with literacy development



Kindergarten and First

As a parent, reading to your child is one of the most important things you can do to prepare him/her with a foundation for academic excellence.

By the age of five, most children can understand up to 13,000 words, forming sentences containing 5-8 words (www.earlymoments.com). As your child approaches kindergarten and first grade, pre-reading activities will become a fundamental part of their everyday life. Pre-reading activities mean:

- looking at print direction,
- first letters of words,
- letters placed together to form words,
- discussing title of book and the difference between author and illustrator,
- using the cover (front and back) to make predictions of what the book might be about .
- discussing the pictures during reading along with why the author may have written the book and why the illustrator may have drawn objects.

Practicing these skills help with forming critical thinking. After reading, ask children questions about the content of the text and ask for proof or evidence from the book to support their thinking. For example, in *The Three*

Little Pigs, what did the pigs think of the wolf? Ask for places that show the student's thinking. Students should be able to connect stories to other stories with the same characters. Consider reading different versions of the same fairy tales and noting the differences. Children should be able to retell the main points as well.

Another important part of literacy is writing. Your child will enjoy telling stories on paper as well. Some pointers are the following:

- Provide a quiet place for your child to write that has supplies such as markers, pencils, pens, and crayons to write with. At early stages of literacy development, drawing pictures and allowing dictation appropriate. Writing words properly takes time.
- Collect magazine pictures and family photographs to provide story starters.
- Encourage, but do not force, a writing journal that young students can log their thoughts or begin stories in. Consider having the student write about things they see, hear or learn in their regular day.
- Have your child listen to a story and log what they thought about the characters, the setting of the story or how a problem was solved.
- Provide authentic opportunities for your student to write such as thank you notes, letters to family members, and party invitations.

Model writing and if invited by your child, respond to their entries in writing. Keep it fun to increase a positive outlook on writing.

Benefits of reading aloud to a child

Aside from building a stronger relationship you, there are many benefits to reading aloud to a young person. Oral language develops as you model enunciation, tone and other critical language skills. Different features of a book can be a focal point such as print awareness (direction of print, letters make words, illustrations) and structure of writing (the type of book, the purpose for which a text is written, how the text is put together, text features such as charts and maps). By witnessing the interactions between the characters in the books you read, and the time spent with an adult, students are much more likely to express themselves and relate to others in a healthy way. Another illustration of the importance of reading to children is their ability to grasp abstract concepts, apply logic in various scenarios, recognize cause and effect, and utilize good judgment as they relate the scenarios in books to what's happening in their own world. Finally, along with reading comprehension comes a stronger self-discipline, longer attention span, and better memory retention, all of which will serve your child in an academic setting.