

Reading Skills

How to Help Your Child Practice Reading

Doing well in school depends on being able to read, write, talk, and listen. Learning to read takes a lot of time and practice for young children. Children have to learn that the lines and circles in letters go together to make words, and that the words have meaning. They have to learn that books have stories or give information.

There are many ways to help your child enjoy books and practice reading. Here are some things you can do.

Where to Find Good Books

A great way to help your child practice reading and become a better reader is to have books at home for him to read. There are several ways to get more books for your children.

- The library is a great source for books. Take your child to the public library or have him check out some books from the library at school. Encourage him to read those with you at home.
- The library also has surplus book sales once in a while where you can often find very inexpensive children's books. Some libraries have a Story Time especially for children.
- Many thrift stores and used book stores have used books for children that do not cost a lot of money.
- Many yard and garage sales have children's books for sale.
- Friends or neighbors may have children's books that they don't use any more. Maybe they will lend or give them to you.
- Friends who also have young children might trade books with you.

The more books children have to read at home, the more fun they will have in practicing reading.



Kindergarten and 1st Grade

Reading Books Together

One of the best things parents can do is read books with their children. Here are some simple tips for reading books with your child:

Before Reading the Book

- Pick stories that will interest your child.
- Read the book first yourself. Knowing the story will help you know what comes next.
- Find a cozy, quiet place to read the story. Call it your reading spot.
- Have your child sit close so she can see the pictures.
- Choose a regular story time. Bedtime, after school or quiet times are great.



While Reading the Book

- Make sure she can see the pictures. Hold the book up or lay it in your lap.
- Watch your child as you read the book. Is she happy, sad, interested? See how she follows the story.
- Try using fun voices. Make the word "scared" sound scared, or the word "tired" sound tired.
- Have her guess what happens next.
- Involve her in saying repeated words or phrases.
- Ask questions like these as you look at the book together:
 - What do you think will happen next?
 - How do you think the boy feels?
 - Is it winter? How do you know?
 - Are there any square shapes in the picture?
 - How many red things do you see?
- Let your child ask questions. This will help keep her interested.

After Reading the Book

- Encourage your child to talk about the stories. Ask questions like these:
 - What did you like best about the book?
 - What would you do if you were in the story?
 - Have you felt the same way?
- Keep time short enough to leave her wanting more later.
- During the day, look for other ways to talk about the story or add to what you read.
- If child is interested, read the book together again. Better yet, have her try to read it or tell the story to you.
- Have fun reading the story together.

Reading with your child helps her do better in school, become a better reader, and increase her attention span. Reading with your child also lets her know she is important to you, builds feelings of love, and creates fun. Give your child the best present of all—your time.

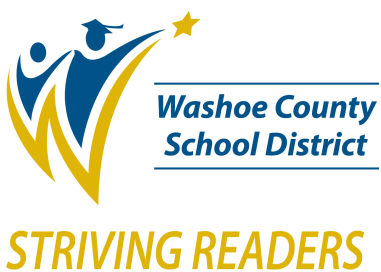
More Ideas for Reading

Words are all around us—food labels, signs, menus, text messages. A great way to help children practice reading is to read the words around them. Here are some fun ways to help your child practice reading every day.

- Have him read his school books or assignments to you.
- When you are out for a drive or walk, have him read street signs to you.
- At the grocery store have him read the labels on food packages. Have him read the labels on the peanut butter, jam, milk, orange juice and find the one you want to buy.
- Have a regular time when he reads to a younger brother or sister, a neighbor, a grandparent, a pet, or even a stuffed animal.
- Have him read the labels on cereal boxes, soup cans, and other food packages in your kitchen.
- Have him read the recipe to you when you cook or the directions for using tools.
- Have him read the outside of envelopes that come in the mail.
- Ask a grandparent or other relative to send your child a letter. Have him read it to you.
- Look for fun reading games on the computer or smart phone. Some great reading games for young children can be found at <http://PBSkids.org>, <http://www.getreadytoread.org>, <http://www.nickjr.com> and <http://disney.go.com/disneyjunior>.
- Send your child a note or email on a smart phone. Have him read it to you.



- Have him read the menu at the restaurant.
- Watch children's shows on public television with your child, such as Sesame Street, Between the Lions, Martha Speaks, WordGirl, Arthur, and WordWorld, and have him read along.



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