

Ways to Help Your Child with Reading at Home

Setting the Atmosphere

Help your child find a quiet, comfortable place to read. Have your child see you as a reading model. Read aloud to your child. Reread favorite stories. Read with your child. Discuss the stories you read together. Recognize the value of silent reading. Keep reading time enjoyable and relaxed.

Responding to Errors in Reading

Based on the way most of us were taught to read, we have told the child to “sound it out” when he comes to an unknown word. While phonics is an important part of reading, reading for meaning is the primary goal. To produce independent readers who monitor and correct themselves as they read, the following prompts are recommended before saying “sound it out”.

Give your child wait time of 5 to 10 seconds. See what he attempts to do to help himself. Then prompt:

--What would make sense there?

--What do you think that word could be?

--Use the picture to help you figure out what it could be.

--Go back to the beginning and try that again.

--Skip over it and read to the end of the sentence: Now what do you think it is?

--Put in a word that would make sense there.

--You read that word before on another page. See if you can find it.

--Look at how that word begins. Start it out and keep reading.

--If all this fails: tell your child the word.

Most important, focus on what your child is doing well and attempting to do. Remain loving and supportive. When your child is having difficulty and trying to work out the trouble spots, comments such as the following are suggested:

--Good for you. I like the way you tried to work that out.

--That was a good try. Yes, that word would make sense there.

--I like the way you looked at the picture to help yourself.

--I like the way you went back to the beginning of the sentence and tried that again. That's what good readers do.

--You are becoming a good reader. I'm proud of you!

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