

Student Success

PARENTS' READ-AT-HOME-PLAN FOR

Student Success

KINDERGARTEN - 3RD GRADE

Dear Parent,

You are your child's first teacher, and reading with your child is a proven way to promote early literacy. Helping to make sure your child is reading on grade level by third grade is one of the most important things you can do to prepare him or her for the future. By reading with your child for 20 minutes per day and making a few simple strategies a part of your daily home routine, you can make a positive impact on your child's success in school.

This guide includes activities to help your child practice 5 of the components of reading:

- 1 Phonemic Awareness
- 2 Phonics
- 3 Fluency
- 4 Vocabulary
- 5 Comprehension
- 6 Writing

We are happy to provide you with this Read-at-Home Plan, which includes strategies to help your child become a proficient reader! Please focus on the specific strategies discussed during your child's Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) meeting.



Reading Matters

A Parent Guide to Michigan's 3rd Grade Reading Law

1 About the law

In an effort to boost reading achievement, Michigan lawmakers passed Public Act 306 in October 2016. To help more students be proficient by the end of 3rd grade, the law requires extra support for K–3 students who are not reading at grade level. The law also states that a child may be retained in 3rd grade if they are one or more grade levels behind in reading at the end of 3rd grade.

2 How schools will help

Your child's school is committed to helping all children become proficient, motivated readers. Your child's reading progress will be closely monitored beginning in kindergarten. If your child's reading is not progressing as expected, a plan for improvement will be created. This plan includes:

- Extra instruction or support in areas of need.
- Ongoing monitoring on reading progress.
- A read-at-home plan that encourages you and your child to read and write outside of the school day and throughout the summer.

Your child will receive regular classroom instruction and additional reading support. Starting in the 2019–2020 school year, in order to be promoted from 3rd to 4th grade, your child must score less than one year behind on the state reading assessment, or demonstrate a 3rd-grade reading level through an alternate test or portfolio of student work. If you are notified that your child may be retained, you have the right to meet with school officials and to request, within 30 days, an exemption if in the best interest of your child. The district will make the final decision. If you are concerned about your child's reading development, talk to his or her teacher.

3 How parents can help

Here are some suggestions for all parents who want to help their child read well:

- Read with your child every day (even in the summer).
- Listen to your child read.
- Echo read (You read a line, then they repeat).
- Choral read (Read together at the same time).
- Reread or retell favorite stories.
- Talk to your child about the stories you have read.

As you read:

- Ask your child to share what they remember.
- Ask questions about the story.
- Talk about your favorite parts, what you've learned, or who is in the book and what they do.
- Talk about the pictures in the book, and how they connect to words on the page.
- Help connect the stories to your child's life or other books you've read.

And, lastly:

- **Talk with your child often:** Knowing more words helps kids to understand the words they read better.
- **Encourage writing:** Let children write the sounds they hear. Spelling is developmental and a work in progress.
- **Stay involved:** Participate in your child's education and support the reading plan if your child has one.



Repeat
the book



Engage
and enjoy



Ask
questions



Do
more

Research shows that reading with your child—not to them—greatly increases children's language and literacy, and puts them on a path to grade level reading.

Watch this video about how to "READ" with your child and try it at home: <https://youtu.be/FjJD1UDwVKg>

Contact your building principal
for more information and support for your child.

Did you know?



**30
million**

Children from professional families have heard **30 million** more words by the time they are three years old than those from families in poverty.



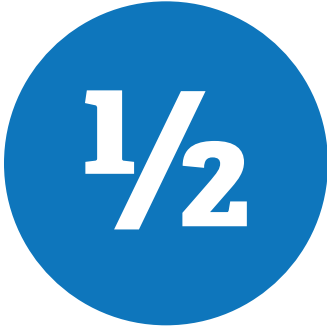
4X

Students who are not proficient readers by 3rd grade are **4 times** more likely to drop out of high school.



85-90%

For **85-90% of poor readers**, intervention and support programs implemented before third grade can increase reading skills to average grade levels.



1/2

In Michigan, **less than 1/2** of third graders are not proficient on the 3rd-grade state ELA assessment.

Children spend 15% of their lives from age 5 to 16 in school and **85% with families**, parents, and communities.



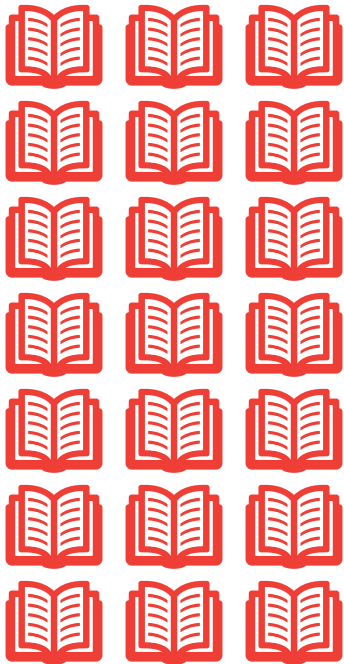
85%

Why read 20 minutes at home every day?



Student "A" reads:

🕒 **20 min.** per day
= **3,600 min.** per school year
= **1,800,000 words** per year
✓ **Scores in the 90th percentile** on standardized tests



Student "B" reads:

🕒 **5 min.** per day
= **900 min.** per school year
= **282,000 words** per year
✓ **Scores in the 50th percentile** on standardized tests



Student "C" reads:

🕒 **1 min.** per day
= **180 min.** per school year
= **8,000 words** per year
✓ **Scores in the 10th percentile** on standardized tests



If a student starts reading 20 minutes per night at home in kindergarten, by the end of 6th grade, Student A will have read for the equivalent of 60 school days, Student B will have read for 12 school days, and Student C will have read for 3 school days. This gap in reading experience and resulting vocabulary knowledge adds up over time.

Want to be a better reader? Just



"READ" is from the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy, 2017 (www.readrightfromthestart.org). Used with permission.



Online resources

Ready4K

3 text messages a week with facts, tips, and growth ideas. Other grades coming.

ready4k.parentpowered.com

Michigan eLibrary

MeL is the Michigan eLibrary, a 24/7 online library for Michigan residents.

kids.mel.org

Scholastic BookFLIX

BookFLIX pairs classic fictional video storybooks from Weston Woods with nonfiction eBooks from Scholastic.

bkflix.grolier.com

Starfall

Starfall helps children learn to read with phonics through interactive audiovisual activities.

starfall.com

Storyline Online

The site streams imaginatively produced videos featuring celebrated actors reading children's books alongside creatively produced illustrations.

storylineonline.net

Activities for the 5 Components of Reading

Includes student-centered activities and a teacher resource guide for kindergarten through 5th grade students.

fcrr.org/for-educators/sca.asp

Parents' Guide to Student Success (National PTA)

Provides clear, consistent expectations for what students should be learning at each grade in order to be prepared for college and career.

pta.org/parentsguides

Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read—A Parent Guide (K-3)

This parent guide provides research and practical solutions for helping your child learn to read.

centeroninstruction.org/files/PutReadingFirst_ParentGuide.pdf

Kids and Family Reading Report

Learn what U.S. parents and children have to say about their attitudes and behaviors around reading books for fun.

scholastic.com/readingreport/

Michigan Department of Education—Early Literacy Initiative

This webpage provides an overview of the state's Early Literacy Initiative legislation.

michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_74161--,00.html

Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

This practice guide offers specific, evidence-based recommendations for teaching foundational reading skills to students.

ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_foundationalreading_070516.pdf



Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and distinguish sounds.

This includes:

- Recognizing sounds, alone and in words
- Adding sounds to words
- Taking apart words and breaking them into their different sounds
- Moving sounds

Phonemic Awareness Activities

Grades K-1



- Play “I Spy” with your child, but instead of naming a color say, “I spy something that starts with /b/” or “I spy something with these sounds, /d/ /õ/ /g/.” Have your child do the same.
- Play a game in which you say a word and your child has to break apart all the sounds. Ask your child to stretch out a word like dog and he/she can pretend to stretch a word with a rubber band. Your child should say /d/ /õ/ /g/.
- Play the “Silly Name Game.” Replace the first letter of each family member’s name with a different letter. For example, ‘Tob’ for ‘Bob’, ‘Watt’ for ‘Matt’, etc.
- As you read, have your child complete the rhyming word at the end of each line.
- Orally provide pairs of words that rhyme and pairs that do not rhyme (EX; pan/man; pat/boy). Ask, “Do ‘pan’ and ‘man’ rhyme? Why? Do ‘pat’ and ‘boy’ rhyme? Why not?”
- Prompt your child to produce rhymes. Ask, “Can you tell me a word that rhymes with ‘cake’?”
- Sing rhyming songs like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” or “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”
- Give your child a small toy car such as a Matchbox car. Write a 3-4 letter word on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.

Say a sentence aloud and ask your child to determine how many words were in the sentence.

Read rhyming books over and over again.

Explain that rhymes are words that sound the same at the end.



To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words:

- Give your child 3-5 blocks, beads, bingo chips, or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word.
- Play Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound, and knees for the third while saying each sound.
- Jump for Sounds. Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.

Phonemic Awareness Activities

Grades 2–3



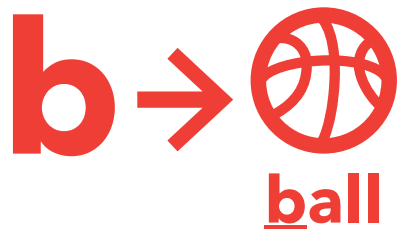
Demonstrate clapping a word into its syllables. Ask your child to clap words into syllables.

Activities for grades 2–3

- Make tally marks for the number of syllables in the names of people in your family, favorite foods, etc.
- Give your child a small car (such as a Matchbox car). Write a 5+ letter word on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.

To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words:

- Give your child 4–7 blocks, beads, bingo chips or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word.
- Play Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound, and knees for the third while saying each sound.
- Jump for sounds. Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.



Phonics

Phonics is the ability to understand the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent.

This includes:

- Recognizing print patterns that represent sounds
- Syllable patterns
- Word parts (prefixes, suffixes, and root words)

Common Consonant Digraphs and Blends:

bl, br, ch, ck, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gh, gl, gr, ng, ph, pl, pr, qu, sc, sh, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, th, tr, tw, wh, wr

Common Consonant Trigraphs:
nth, sch, scr, shr, spl, spr, squ, str, thr

Common Vowel Digraphs:

ai, au, aw, ay, ea, ee, ei, eu, ew, ey, ie, oi, oo, ou, ow, oy

Phonics Activities

Grades K–1



- Make letter-sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words. (for example, if the letters “p-e-n” spell pen, how do you spell hen?).
- Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter d).
- Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child’s names (for example, John and jump). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, “I am thinking of something that starts with /t/.”
- Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.
- Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess which hand the letter is in. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter m matches the /m/ sound as in man).
- Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabet in order. Say letter-sounds and ask your child to pick out the letters that match those sounds.
- Build words. Using magnetic letters, make a three letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, sat, mat, rat, pat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).

Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name.

Make alphabet letters out of Play-doh®.



Make letter-sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.

Phonics Activities

Grades K–1, cont'd



- Make words. For this game, you will need magnetic letters and three bags. Put half of the consonants into the first bag. Put the vowels into the middle bag, and put the remaining consonants into the last bag. Have your child pull one letter from the first bag. That will be the first letter of their word. Then have your child pull from the vowel bag for the second letter of the word and from the other consonant bag for the third letter of the word. Next, the child will read the word and decide if it is a real word or a nonsense word. Take turns, replacing the vowels as needed until there are no more consonants left.
- Practice words with pictures. Choose pictures from a magazine or catalog. Say the name of the picture, have your child say the sound that the picture begins with and the name of that letter.
- Hunt for words. Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is “m”, the child might find and write mop, mat, Mom, money, and microwave.

Teach your child to recognize the letters in his or her name.

Discuss how names are similar and different.

Hints for helping your child sound out words

- Sound and Blend. Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t). This is called “sounding it out,” and then say the sounds together (sat). This is “blending.”
- Familiar Parts. When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as “presenting”, your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word “sent,” and the word ending -ing.

house

Label words. When reading with your child, keep Post-it notes handy. Every so often, have your child choose one object in the picture and write the word on a Post-it. Put the note in the book to read each time you come to that page.

Phonics Activities

Grades K–1, cont'd

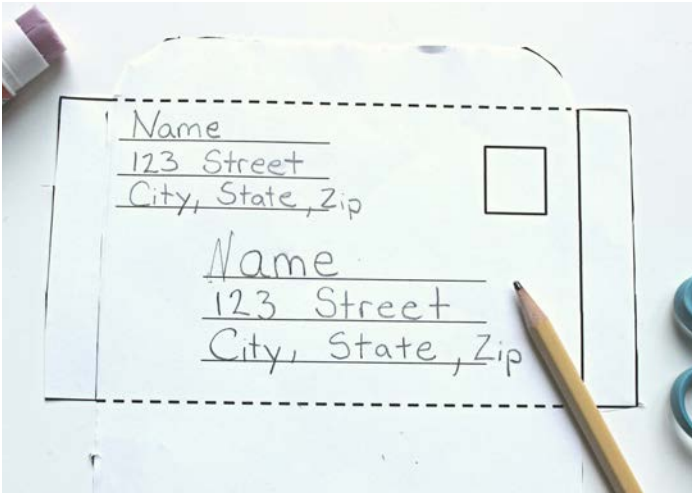


Use magnetic letters to spell words on the refrigerator or spell names of family members and friends.

- Recognizing shapes is the beginning of recognizing the features of letters. Have your child sort letters by tall tails, short tails, hooks, humps, and circles. Your child can continue to sort by feature combinations as well (Ex: circles and tall tails, hooks and circles, humps and tall tails, etc.)
- Ask your child to name stores, restaurants, and other places that have signs. This is called environmental print. Have your child cut the images of these signs from bags, take-out containers, and fliers and post them somewhere to make an Environmental Print Word Wall.
- Ask your child to look through ads to point out things he/she recognizes. Ask if they know any of the letters on the page.
- Use stores as an opportunity for learning! Ask questions like, “Can you find something that has a letter C? Can you find a word that begins with an M? Can you find something with 4 letters?” Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.
- Write letters with your finger on your child’s back and have them guess the letter. Have your child do the same to you.
- Play “Memory” or “Go Fish” using alphabet cards.
- Read alphabet books to your child and eventually ask him/her to name the items on the page that you know he/she can successfully tell you.

Phonics Activities

Grades 2–3



Children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Send your child notes in his/her backpack or place notes on the pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child. When your child receives a note, have him/her write back. Don't be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out the words to the best of his/her ability.

- Make blend-sounds and have your child write the letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters “l-a-t-e-r” spell later, how do you spell later? How many syllables are in later?).
- Write vowel and consonant digraphs, trigraphs, and blends on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the long e sound /ē/ for the vowel digraphs ea and ee).
- Hunt for words. Choose a blend and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is “bl,” the child might find and write blanket, blood, blue, blizzard, blast.

Hints for helping your child sound out words

- Sound and Blend. Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t). This is called “sounding it out”, and then say the sounds together (sat). This is “blending”.
- Familiar Parts. When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as “presenting”, your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word “sent,” and the word ending -ing.
- Play “Memory” or “Go Fish” using consonant and vowel digraphs, trigraphs, and blends.



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read with sufficient speed to support understanding. This includes:

- Automatic word recognition
- Accurate word recognition
- Use of expression

Fluency Activities

Grades K–1



- Repeated reading. Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, and then read it together, helping your child figure out any tricky words. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.
- Use different voices. When reading a familiar story or passage, try having your child use different voices. Read the story in a mouse voice, cowboy voice, or a princess voice. This is another way to do repeated reading, and it adds some fun to reading practice.
- Read to different audiences. Reading aloud is a way to communicate to an audience. When a reader keeps the audience in mind, he/she knows that his reading must be fluent and expressive. Provide a variety of opportunities for your child to read to an audience. Your child can read to stuffed animals, pets, siblings, neighbors, grandparents—anyone who is willing to listen. This is a good way to show off what was practiced with repeated reading.
- Record the reading. After your child has practiced a passage, have him/her record it with a tape player or MP3 device. Once recorded, your child can listen to his reading and follow along in the book. Often, he/she will want to record it again and make it even better!
- When you read a story, use appropriate expression during dialogue. Encourage your child to mimic your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- In a repetitive text, ask your child to repeat the familiar phrase with you. Ex: For the story, “The House that Jack Built” your child can recite with you “in the house that Jack built.”
- When reading a story, use appropriate expression during the speaking parts (dialogue). Encourage your child to copy your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- Point out punctuation marks that aid in expression such as question marks, exclamation points and quotation marks. Demonstrate how your voice changes as you read for each. Only focus on one during a book. Remember it is important to enjoy it first and foremost.
- Make your own books of favorite songs for your child to practice “reading.” This builds confidence and helps your child identify him/herself as a reader.
- Say a sentence to your child and ask him/her to repeat it. Challenge your child to increase the number of words he/she can repeat. As you say it, put it in meaningful phrases. Ex: The boy went/to the store/with his mother.
- Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem or nursery rhyme with your child. He/she will mimic your phrasing and expression.

Encourage your child to sing favorite songs and repeat favorite lines of songs.

Recite nursery rhymes and poems to build familiar phrases in speech.

Fluency Activities

Grades 2–3



Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem with your child. He/she will mimic your phrasing and expression.

- Repeated reading. Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, and then read it together, helping your child figure out any tricky words. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.
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- Record the reading. After your child has practiced a passage, have him/her record it with a tape player, cell phone, or MP3 device. Once recorded, your child can listen to his reading and follow along in the book. Often, he/she will want to record it again and make it even better!
- When you read a story, use appropriate expression during dialogue. Encourage your child to mimic your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- Make your own books of favorite songs for child to practice “reading”. This builds confidence and helps your child identify him/herself as a reader.



Vocabulary

Vocabulary is students' knowledge of and memory for word meanings. This includes:

Receptive Vocabulary

Words we understand when read or spoken to us

Expressive vocabulary

Words we know well enough to use in speaking and writing

Vocabulary Activities

Grades K–1



- Read aloud. Continue to read aloud to your child even after he is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him new words and how they are used in context.
- Preview words. Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book, choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- Hot potato (version 1). Play hot potato with synonyms. Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. For example, you may say, "Cold," and your child might say, "Freezing." Then you could say, "Chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).
- Hot potato (version 2). Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms.
- Word Collecting. Have each family member be on the look out for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "farms" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!

Use the language of books such as author, title, illustrator, and title page.

Discuss opposites (antonyms).

Discuss ordinal words such as first, last, beginning, and middle.



Introduce your child to a variety of experiences to help build background knowledge he/she can use while making sense of print by taking them to the park, museums, the zoo, etc.

Vocabulary Activities

Grades K–1, cont'd



Talk about how things are similar/alike as well as how things are different. Ex: How is a dog like a cat? How is a dog different from a cat?

- Discuss positional words such as beside, below, under, over, etc. Make it into a game at dinner by asking your child to place his/her fork in different places in relation to his/her plate. Ex: Put your fork above your plate.
- Use a variety of words to describe feelings and emotions. For example, your child says he/she is happy. You can validate that by saying, “I’m so glad you are so joyful today! You sure look happy!”
- Trips to everyday places build vocabulary. Discuss what you are doing and seeing as you are going through the store, for example. “I’m here in the bakery. I can find donuts, cookies, and bread.” Ask your child, “What else do you think I could find here?”
- When you read a book about a topic, ask him/her to tell you all the words related to it. Ex: If you read a book about a dog, he/she might say dog, puppies, toy, food, play, leash. Add other words to help expand upon what he/she says.
- When you read a book, ask your child to identify categories for words he/she has read. Ex: If you read a book about pumpkins, you could put the words pumpkin, leaf, stem, and seeds into a category about the parts of a plant.

Vocabulary Activities

Grades 2–3



- Read aloud. Continue to read aloud to your child even after he is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him new words and how they are used in context.
- Preview words. Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book, choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- Hot potato (version 1) - Play hot potato with synonyms (words with similar meanings). Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. For example, you may say, "Cold," and your child might say, "Freezing." Then you could say, "Chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).
- Hot potato (version 2) - Play hot potato with prefixes or suffixes. The prefixes dis-, ex-, mis-, non-, pre-, re-, and un- are common. Common suffixes include -able/-ible, -ed, -er, -est, -ful, -ish, -less, -ly, -ment, and -ness.
- Hot potato (version 3) - Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms.
- Word Collecting - Have each family member be on the look out for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "ecosystems" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!
- When you read a book about a topic, ask him/her to tell you all the words related to it. Ex: If you read a book about dinosaurs, he/she might say Tyrannosaurus Rex, paleontologist, herbivore, carnivore, fossil. Add other words to help expand upon what he/she says.



Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand and draw meaning from text. This includes:

- Paying attention to important information
- Interpreting specific meanings in text
- Identifying the main idea
- Verbal responses to questions
- Application of new information gained through reading

Comprehension Activities

Grades K–1



- Sequencing errands. Talk about errands that you will run today. Use sequencing words (sequence, first, next, last, finally, beginning, middle, end) when describing your trip. For example, you might say, “We are going to make three stops. First, we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store.”
- Every day comprehension. Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, and how questions about an event in his/her day. For example, if your child attended a party, you could ask, “Who was there? What did you do? When did you have cake? Where did you go? Why did the invitation have dogs on it? How did the birthday child like the presents?” Once your child is comfortable answering these questions about his/her experiences, try asking these questions about a book you’ve read together.
- Think aloud. When you read aloud to your child, talk about what you are thinking. It is your opportunity to show your child that reading is a lot more than just figuring out the words. Describe how you feel about what’s going on in the book, what you think will happen next, or what you thought about a character’s choice.



Reading Fiction

- Before reading. Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, “What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?” This will help your child set purpose for reading.
- During reading. Stop every now and then to ask your child to tell you what has happened so far or what he/she predicts will happen. You might also ask for your child’s opinion. “Do you think the character did the right thing? How do you feel about that choice?” Explain any unfamiliar words.
- After reading. Ask your child to retell the story from the beginning, and ask for opinions, too. “What was your favorite part? Would you recommend this to a friend?”

Reading Nonfiction

- Before reading. Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, “What do you think you’ll learn about in this book? Why?” This helps your child consider what he already knows about the topic. Look at the table of contents. You and your child may choose to read the book cover to cover or go directly to a certain chapter.
- During reading. Don’t forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or any other information on a page. Young readers tend to overlook these, so it’s a good idea to show that the author includes lots of information in these “extras.”
- After reading. Ask your child, “What was it mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?”

Comprehension Activities

Grades K–1, cont'd



Other Ideas

- Before your child reads a story, read the title and look at the cover. Ask, “What do you think will happen in the story?”
- Take a quick “book look” and encourage your child to talk about what he/she thinks about what might happen in the story.
- As your child reads, ask questions that start with who, what, where, when, why, and how. If your child does not answer with an appropriate response, redirect by saying, “I think you mean a person because it was a “who” question” then restate the question.
- After you read a few pages, ask “What do you think will happen next?”
- Ask your child to talk about the beginning, middle and end of the story. You will need to model this several times first.
- Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem, and solution. For example, “How did characters of the Three Bears solve the problem of the porridge being too hot?” If the child does not know, show the picture or reread the page.
- After reading, ask your child, “What was your favorite part? Show me. Why do you like that part?”
- Ask questions about character traits. Ex: “Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? How do you know?” If your child doesn’t know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it. He/she may also “mimic” your answer. Encourage your child’s attempts.
- Encourage deeper thinking by asking, “If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?”
- Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, “Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something? The boy who went to the zoo with his family reminds me of when we went to the zoo over the summer. What do you think?”
- As you are reading, think out loud to your child. Ask questions such as “I wonder why the boy is crying in the picture? Will he find his lost toy?” This demonstrates that reading and comprehension is an active process, not passive.



Make puppets to help your child retell a favorite story or use stuffed animals as props to retell a story or part of a favorite story.

Comprehension Activities

Grades 2–3



- Sequencing comics. Choose a comic strip from the Sunday paper. Cut out each square and mix the squares up. Have your child put them in order and describe what is happening. Encourage your child to use words like first, second, next, finally, etc.
- Every day comprehension. Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, how questions about an event in his/her day. Once your child is comfortable answering these questions about his/her experiences, try asking these questions about a book you've read together.

Reading Fiction

- Before reading. Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?" This will help your child set purpose for reading.
- During reading. Stop every now and then to ask your child to tell you what has happened so far or what he/she predicts will happen. You might also ask for your child's opinion. "Do you think the character did the right thing? How do you feel about that choice?" Explain any unfamiliar words.
- After reading. Ask your child to retell the story from the beginning, and ask for opinions, too. "What was your favorite part? Would you recommend this to a friend?"

Reading Nonfiction

- Before reading. Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think you'll learn about in this book? Why?" This helps your child consider what he already knows about the topic. Look at the table of contents.
- During reading. Don't forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or any other information on a page. Young readers tend to overlook these, so it's a good idea to show that the author includes lots of information in these "extras."
- After reading. Ask your child, "What was it mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?"

Other Ideas

- Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem, and solution. For example, "How did the Wright Brothers find a solution to help their plane fly longer?" If the child does not know, show the picture or reread the page.
- Ask questions about character traits. Ex: "Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? How do you know?" If your child doesn't know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it.
- Encourage deeper thinking by asking, "If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?"
- Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, "Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something?"



Writing

Writing is the act of using written words to communicate ideas. Children develop several skills as they become writers, including how to organize their ideas, how to use written symbols (letters and words) to record those ideas and how different types of writing are organized. This includes learning about:

- Tools for learning and communicating and expressing themselves with others
- The writing process which is a series of steps (getting an idea, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing)
- Many types of writing including real and imaginary information

Writing Activities



Our youngest learners begin “playing” with ideas as they talk and listen to stories and begin “playing” with the written elements of writing as they make squiggles and begin to record “letter-like” forms.

Prior to age 3, when a child makes a squiggle, they are experimenting in cause and effect or imitation and increasing the muscle control in their hands. It's not until around their third birthday that they start to understand drawn and written marks can stand for objects or words. This is symbolic knowledge. Reading books together and pointing out letters, numbers, animals, and people helps kids' link meaning to drawings and words to help them learn to write.

- **Talk, talk, talk with your child.** Talk about your everyday family activities, describe what's happening outside, talk about where you're going while in the car or on the bus. Ask your child to talk about his day. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played.
- **Story Talk.** Think aloud about a story. Talking about stories helps children develop their vocabularies, link stories to everyday life, and use what they know about the world to make sense out of stories. Connect your story to a similar story your child may have experienced. Help your child tell their story. Children are great mimics. When you tell stories, your child will begin to tell stories, too.
- **Making Early Marks.** In order for any child to write meaningfully, he or she must first build up their fine motor skills. Art projects, working with play dough, measuring and pouring sand and water, and practicing writing are excellent ways to improve fine motor skills.
- **Scribbles to Stick Figures.** Create writing stations. Keep markers, crayons, pencils, and paper in places around your home that offer lots of light and flat surfaces to work on. Be sure to offer lots of choices of materials for your child to create with.
- **Drawing Shapes.** Point out shapes in the house and try to draw them together (be encouraging). Have tracing stencils available for your child to trace.
- **Tracing.** Trace and say letters. Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.
- **Drawing Pictures of Real People, Objects, and Events.** Encourage all efforts. Let your child tell you what he/she made. Hang your child's art in their room or on the refrigerator.
- **Drawing Pictures That Tell a Story.** Ask your child to dictate a story to you. It could include any memory or activity. Have them to draw their story. When their drawing is finished, ask them to retell the story to you or a family member pointing out the parts of their picture that represent their story as they tell it.
- **Recognizing Letters.** Write your child's name on a card so they can look at it often. Talk about the letters in your child's name. Look around the house and find the letters in their name or in other words in magazines or books you read to them. Encourage your child to pick out letters they know.
- **Imitate Letters in Writing.** Have letter, word and picture cards or stencils available. Encourage children to practice tracing or writing the letters. Use white boards, their fingers, play dough, shoe strings, etc., to practice writing the letters.

Writing Activities



● **Family Stories – Writing Ideas.**

- Help your child draw a family portrait.
- Use a chalkboard or a family message board as an exciting way to involve children in writing with a purpose.
- When children begin to write, they run the risk of criticism, and it takes courage to continue. Our job as parents is to help children find the courage. We can do it by expressing our appreciation of their efforts.
- Family stories enrich the relationship between parent and child. Tell your child stories about your parents and grandparents. Reminisce about when you were little. Describe things that happened at school involving teachers and subjects you were studying. Talk about your brothers, sisters, or friends. You might even put these stories in a book and add old family photographs. This could model how you write about and keep these special memories or stories. Have your child tell stories and add their pages to the journal (or keep your own journals). This will be a special place to hold writing ideas. Buy matching journals for you and your child, and set aside time to write or draw in them together.
- Write a trip journal with your child to create a new family story. Recording the day's events and pasting the photographs into the journal ties the family story to a written record. You can include everyday trips like going to the market or the park.
- It helps for children to know that stories come from real people and are about real events. When children listen to stories, they hear the voice of the storyteller. This helps them hear the words when they learn to read aloud or read silently.

- ## ● **Recognize Names and Some Words.** Help your child pick out words they recognize in magazines and books or online. Talk about what you notice and the similarities and differences in the known words. Create word cards to practice the words.

Write Letters in Their Name. Help your child write their name by first modeling it for them, making the sounds of each letter before you write the letter. Encourage them to copy it. When your child says they can write their name alone let them. Don't critique but encourage all efforts. Let them know how proud of their attempts you are. Be sure to provide choice of materials for them to practice writing their name.

Write Other Letters and Words. Talk about letters and sounds. Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmm." Can you write that letter?

Writing Personal Letters. Turn the playroom into a mailroom. You and your child can "address" envelopes, stuff them with drawings, and make deliveries to family members. When children receive and write letters, they realize that printed word has a purpose. Be sure to read aloud the letters with expression and encourage your child to do the same. Explain the writing process to your child: "We think of ideas and put them into words; we put the words on paper; people read the words; and people respond." You could also create handmade greeting cards together.

Writing Activities



● Making Lists.

- Encourage your child to help you make your grocery shopping list. Ask what letters or symbols go with the sounds of the words you are putting on your list. For example, “What sound do you hear at the beginning of milk? And what letter makes that sound? Would you like to make that M for me please?”
- Encourage your child to help you create a menu when guests come for dinner.
- Encourage your child to make a personal dictionary by putting together several sheets of paper for a booklet. They can write new words that they are learning at the top of each page. Encourage them to draw a picture for each new word.

● **Show Enthusiasm.** Keep your child writing and drawing by showing how much you like their work. Praise their efforts frequently, and show you care by hanging their creations on your fridge or another place in the home. Be sure to ask them to “read” you what they’ve written, or write a story together. Carry writing materials with you everywhere you go so when waiting in line or at the doctor’s office you can write together.

● **Model.** Let your child watch you write notes, make out checks, create shopping lists, and doodle. He’ll be more likely to write if he knows that you think it’s important.

How to write a story:



Think



Picture



Say



Sketch



Write