

**Taylor County District School Board
Office of the Superintendent
Agenda Item for School Board Approval**

Date Submitted 07/12/2024 Board Meeting Date 07/23/2024

Date agenda item is due in the Superintendent's Office 07/12/2024

Person submitting the item: Jill Rudd

Name of document placed on agenda: TCSD Read at Home Plan

Summary description regarding this action item:
Please review and acknowledge the TCSD
Read at Home Plan for the 2024-2025 School year

APPROVED
JUL 23 2024
By Taylor County School Board

Signatures Required

Yes No

Reviewed by:
Director of Finance _____

The action described above is provided for and is consistent with relevant contract and grant provisions and the Board approved budget as amended.

Director of Personnel _____
The action described above is provided for and is consistent with the Board approved staffing plan and collective bargaining agreements.

Director of Instruction Jill Rudd
The action described above is provided for and is consistent with relevant Federal programs and the Board approved School Improvement, Instructional and Curriculum Plans.

Superintendent _____



Taylor County School District

APPROVED

JUL 23 2024

By Taylor County
School Board

Working together to increase student learning



READ AT HOME PLAN

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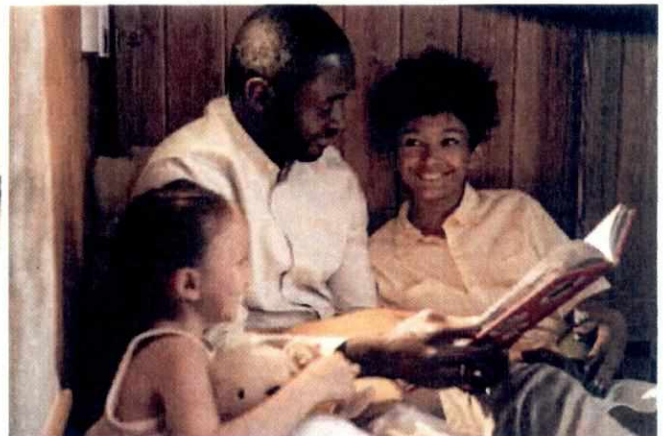


WELCOME

Parents,

It is widely recognized that the foundation of learning begins at home, where you, as the primary educators of your children, play a crucial role in their growth. Engaging in shared reading sessions with your child is a proven method to enhance early literacy skills. A key objective is to ensure your child achieves reading proficiency by the end of third grade to prepare them for the future.

By dedicating at least 20 minutes daily to reading with your child and incorporating simple strategies from our Read-At-Home Plan, you can significantly boost your child's academic progress. We are delighted to introduce our Read-At-Home plan, which includes strategies to help you nurture your child's reading skills and spark a love for literature.



Read at home resources



A read-at-home plan is required to be provided to parents of any K-3 student who has been identified with a substantial deficiency in reading. The Florida Department of Education has compiled resources that each school district must include into a read-at-home plan provided to the parent of a student who is identified as having a substantial reading deficiency.

A read-at-home plan includes information and resources connected to the essential components of reading: oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These resources are available in an electronic format that is accessible online, and a hardcopy of such resources must be provided by the school upon parent request. To access these resources digitally, click on each link provided below.

FL DOE's Read at Home Initiative

PARENT GUIDES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

The Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) are literacy standards for Florida students that will shape their education and make Florida the most literate state in the nation. The B.E.S.T. Standards will pave the way for Florida students to receive a world-class education and prepare them for a successful future. Parent Guides have been developed to help families learn more about the new B.E.S.T. ELA Standards.

[Parent Guide for English Language Arts Standards](#)

SUPPORTING READING AT HOME

Learning to read begins at home through everyday interactions with children, long before they attend school. Supporting literacy development as children enter elementary school and progress through grades positively affects their reading ability. The Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast provides family activities with easy-to-follow instructions to help children practice foundational reading skills at home. Foundational skills include oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Phonological awareness, alphabetic skills and language skills are the best predictors of early reading success (B.E.S.T., Appendix E, p. 206). There are short family videos for tips and support on how to use the activities to help children grow as readers. Using the family activities at home can help children develop language, link sounds to letters, blend letters and word parts to read and write the words and ultimately read for understanding.

[Supporting Reading at Home](#)

NEW WORLDS READING

The New Worlds Reading Initiative gives hundreds of thousands of eligible Pre-K - grade 5 students the chance to build personalized libraries that reflect their unique interests and backgrounds, at no cost to families or schools. Your child may be eligible to receive books and supporting materials each month.

[New Worlds Reading Initiative](#)

New Worlds Scholarships

The New Worlds Scholarship Accounts provide \$500 scholarships to eligible K-5 students. The program offers parents/guardians access to education savings accounts to pay for tuition and fees related to part-time tutoring, summer and after-school literacy or mathematics programs and instructional materials (including desktop/laptop computers and tablets and curriculum related to reading, literacy, or mathematics). Your child may be eligible for a New Worlds Scholarship Account.

[New Worlds Scholarship Accounts](#)



OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT TYPES

As students' progress from kindergarten through third grade, they should be steadily developing the skills they need to become grade-level readers. While students are learning to read, educators and parents can monitor students to see if they are on track to become successful readers. Florida uses four types of assessments to monitor students' progress in reading. [Overview of Assessment types](#)

Screening – The purpose of screening is to identify the probability of risk or success in reading achievement.

Progress Monitoring – The purpose of progress monitoring, also called interim or formative assessment, is to determine whether students are learning the skills taught and/or meeting benchmarks throughout the school year.

Diagnostic – The purpose of a diagnostic assessment is to identify students' strengths and weaknesses for students identified as at-risk on a screening assessment.

Summative – The purpose of summative, or outcome, assessment is to evaluate students' performance relative to a set of content standards generally administered at the end of the school year.

STATEWIDE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) ASSESSMENTS

All Florida students participate in the state's assessment and accountability system. The primary goal of these assessments is to provide information about student learning in Florida, as required by Florida law (see Section (s.) 1008.22, Florida Statutes (F.S.)).

Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST): FAST assessments provide information in mastering grade-level standards for PreK-grade 10 and provide information on students' progress to parents, teachers and school and program administrators. FAST assessments are administered during three Progress Monitoring (PM) windows: beginning of the school year (PM1), middle of the school year (PM2) and end of the school year (PM3).

For more information regarding FAST assessments, please visit fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/best/.

For resources related to FAST assessments, visit flfast.org/fast.html.

Grades 3–10 FAST ELA Reading PM3: In accordance with s. 1008.22(3)(a), F.S., PM3 is a statewide, standardized assessment in ELA and, beginning in 2023-24, will be used for accountability purposes.

Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA): The FAA is aligned with Access Points - Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AP-AAAS). AP-AAAS reflect the most salient content of Florida's statewide academic achievement standards that apply to all students in the same grade. Students with a most significant cognitive disability who meet the criteria in the Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), Statewide Assessment for Students with Disabilities may participate in the FAA if their individual educational plan (IEP) team determines it is the most appropriate assessment option.

SUPPORTS FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is extremely important for supporting the education of all students, including students with disabilities. For students who have difficulty learning, the Florida Department of Education provides a variety of supports to assist parents in being involved in the educational decision-making process. [Parent Information](#) [Dispute Resolution Systems](#)

Evaluating and identifying a student for Exceptional Student Education

When a parent, teacher or caregiver suspects a student may have a disability, there are important steps that are necessary to know and take. A diagnosis of a medical condition alone is not sufficient to establish eligibility for exceptional student education. Consistent with Title 34, Section 300.306 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team must consider multiple sources of data and information to determine not only if the student is a student with a disability, but also that the student requires special education and related services. If a parent submits documentation from a licensed professional under chapter 490, F.S., which demonstrates that a K-3 student has been diagnosed with dyslexia, evidence-based interventions must be provided based on the student's specific areas of difficulty as identified by the licensed professional (see s. 1008.25(5), F.S.). The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) has many resources to guide parents, teachers and caregivers through the process of evaluating and identifying a student who is suspected of being a student with a disability requiring exceptional student education.

Characteristics of a Specific Learning Disability

Specific Learning Disability is a term that describes an Exceptional Student Education eligibility category, which refers to learning disorders that can affect a student's ability to read, write, listen, speak, reason and apply basic math skills. [Specific Learning Disabilities \(SLD\)](#)

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELLs) have a wide variety of supports available to increase the essential components of reading. Each school district has an ELL Plan detailing strategies and resources to support the academic achievement of ELLs. More information may be located at: [Student Achievement through Language Acquisition \(SALA\)](#)

Did you know?

Reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade sets students on a path to learn, graduate and succeed.



LEARNING DISABILITY

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Dyslexia:

A specific learning disability or language-based disability neurobiological in nature that can range from mild to severe

Difficulty with accurate and fluent word recognition and spelling

- Confusion in sequence of letters and sounds
- Easily distracted, difficulty in retaining information
- Temporal and spatial difficulties
- More than average anxiety, frustration or avoidance behaviors
- Difficulties persist despite receiving reading instruction that is effective for most children
- May co-exist with dyscalculia and/or dysgraphia
- Does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of a visual, hearing, motor, intellectual or emotional/behavioral disability, limited English proficiency or environmental factors

Dysgraphia:

A learning disability primarily affecting writing

- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters, excessive erasures and cross-outs in writing
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- Slow to write and copy with legible or illegible handwriting

Dyscalculia:

A learning disability affecting mathematics

- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters, excessive erasures and cross-outs in writing
- Extreme difficulty in performing simple calculations, telling time or working with money
- Difficulty with mental arithmetic skills
- Difficulty predicting appropriate procedures based on understanding patterns
- A poor sense of estimation
- Unable to organize objects in a logical way
- Self-checking work and finding alternate ways to solve problems
- High levels of mathematical anxiety

Developmental Aphasia:

A learning disability affecting primarily language and communication

- Poor comprehension skills
- Difficulty in forming words and sentences, speaking and word recall
- Trouble understanding speech
- Difficulty in reading and writing
- Leaving out words like 'the,' 'of' and 'was' from speech
- Speaking only in short phrases that are produced with great effort
- Putting words together in the wrong order

Our Philosophy

Taylor County School District aims to lead with ambition, foster positive attitudes, obtain optimal attendance, and provide rigorous academics in order to improve student achievement.

The vision of the Taylor School District is to create the most appropriate environment in which ALL students can experience academic success and achieve their educational and career goals while becoming well-rounded members of our global community.

District Instructional Supervisors

Alicia Beshears	Superintendent
Jill Rudd	Director of Instruction
Sabrina Bethea	Supervisor of ESE and Student Services

School Administration

Amy Bowden	Supervisor	Pre-K
Misty Smyrnios	Principal	Primary School
Chuck Finley	Principal	Elementary School
James Bray	Principal	Steinhatchee School
Kasey Roberts	Principal	Middle School
Heather McCoy	Principal	High School

READING BEGINS AT HOME

Strong parental involvement is a key component of the Just Read, Florida! initiative. Other than helping your children to grow up happy and healthy, the most important thing that you can do for them is help them develop their reading skills.

Babies

Read to your baby for short periods of time several times a day. As you read, point out things in the pictures. Name the items as you point to them. Cardboard or cloth books with large simple pictures are the best books to begin with.

Ages 1-4

Talk with your child as you read together. Point to pictures and name what is in them. When your child is ready, ask him or her to do the same. Ask your child about his or her favorite parts of the story and answer your child's questions about events or characters.

Wherever you are with your child, point out individual letters in signs, billboards, posters and books. When your child is 3 to 4 years old, ask him or her to begin finding and naming some letters.

Kindergarten

Read predictable books to your child. Teach him or her to hear and say repeating words, such as names for colors, numbers, letters and animals. Predictable books help children to understand how stories progress. A child easily learns familiar phrases and repeats them, pretending to read.

Practice the sounds of language by reading books with rhymes and playing simple word games (i.e., How many words can you make up that sound like the word "bat"?).

First Grade

Point out the letter-sound relationships your child is learning on labels, boxes, newspapers and magazines.

Listen to your child read words and books from school. Be patient and listen as your child practices. Let him or her know you are proud of their reading.

Second & Third Grade

Build reading accuracy by having your child read aloud and point out words he or she missed and help him or her read words correctly. If you stop to focus on a word, have your child reread the whole sentence to be sure he or she understands the meaning.

*Taken from the U.S. Department of Education "Helping Your Child Become A Reader" and The Partnership for Reading "Put Reading First" publications.

Taylor County's Read at Home Plan

Parents are an integral role in student success. Parents are the first and most influential teachers, and they understand the importance of their student's achievement in school.

Reading serves as the fundamental skill that opens all doors of learning. It is imperative for students to attain reading proficiency during the early grades, particularly from Kindergarten to 3rd grade, as this proficiency enables them to access information and learning opportunities throughout their educational journey.

This Read-at-Home initiative is designed to aid parents in supporting their children's reading development at home. Apart from engaging in daily 20-minute reading sessions with their children, parents can utilize the provided strategies to address specific areas where their children may require assistance. Parents are encouraged to speak with the classroom teacher for any clarifications or additional support that may be necessary.

Read At Home Plan

Student: _____ Date: _____ Current Level of Intervention: Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3

Student's Data:

Assessments	Beginning of Year	Middle of Year	Grade Level End of Year Target

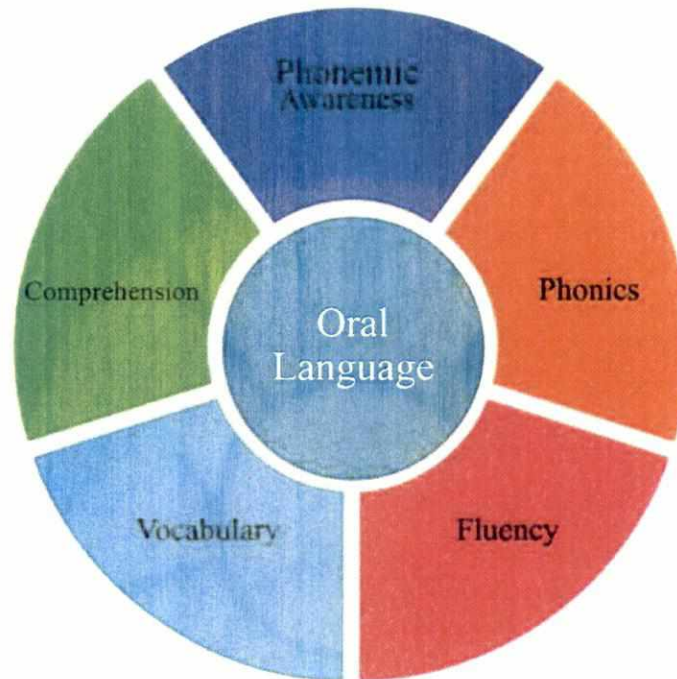
Current Classroom Intervention: _____

Identified Area(s) of Need: (Check all that apply)

- Oral Language
- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

The Read at Home Plan is organized by these areas. Specific suggestions for support may be found in each section.

Foundations for Literacy



Oral language encompasses both speaking and listening. Oral language skills include learning how spoken words sound, what words and sentences mean, and how to communicate ideas. Nurturing oral language skills provides a strong foundation for learning to read.

Phonemic Awareness occurs before children learn to read print; they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of individual speech sounds, or phonemes. A child's skill in phonological and phonemic awareness is a good predictor of later reading success or difficulty.

Phonics instruction teaches the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. To read, children need to understand the alphabetic principle — the idea that letters represent the sounds of spoken language.

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression. Fluent reading builds stamina for reading lengthy or complex texts. Reading fluency serves as a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process and is critical to reading comprehension. Children learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Other words are learned through carefully designed instruction.

Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand or connect to what they are reading, they are not really reading. Good readers are both purposeful and active, and have the skills to absorb what they read, analyze it, make sense of it, and make it their own.

Oral Language Activities

Walk and Talk

When you take a walk through your neighborhood, encourage your child to point out things she sees and to talk about them. React to your child's observations by asking open-ended questions (who, what, why, where, when or how) and add your own observations to encourage a lively conversation. During the walk you might want to stop and say, "Listen, what can you hear?" Or if you hear a familiar sound, stop and say, "Do you hear that knocking sound? What do you think that could be? Maybe it's a woodpecker — let's look up and see if we can spot the bird."

Act it Out

Read stories such as *The Three Bears* or *Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Act out the stories using different-sized stuffed animals. This is a great opportunity to talk about the concepts of "small, medium, and large." Go on a scavenger hunt in your home to find other objects of different sizes (shoes, socks, cups, etc.) and ask your child to classify the items by size. You might also ask your child if he knows another word for small and large.

Sing It

Create or learn songs to expand your child's vocabulary. One idea: make up songs to describe your daily routines, periodically adding new verses that include new vocabulary words.

Listening Games

Play "I Spy" with your child using words that describe an object's position. ("I spy something on the carpet, in front of the couch, next to the dog.") Play games such as "Red-Light Green-Light," and "Simon Says" that require talking, listening, following directions, and giving directions.

Grocery Store Literacy

Position words are used every day at home and in preschool. Use the items on the grocery shelf to give your child practice finding something above their belly button, below their nose, on the bottom shelf, and between other items on a shelf. Opportunities to use superlatives, those little endings that help describe size, are all around the grocery store. Have your child find a big fruit, a bigger fruit and the biggest fruit in the produce section. What's the smallest item in the cart? The largest item?

Kitchen Conversations

Take advantage of daily activities. For example, while in the kitchen, encourage your child to name the utensils needed. Discuss the food you'll be eating, their color, texture, and taste. Where does the food come from? Which foods do you like? Which do you dislike? Who will clean up? Emphasize the use of prepositions by asking him or her to put the napkin on the table, in your lap, or under the spoon. Identify who the napkin belongs to: "It is my napkin." "It is Daddy's." "It is John's."

We're Going on An Adventure

Ask your child to draw a map of an imaginary place he would like to explore. Have him tell you a little bit about the setting and who might live there. If you like, you can dress up (sometimes a hat or cardboard tube spyglass is all you need) and set out on your adventure. Encourage your child to tell you all about the journey and what he's experiencing. Your child will love it if you are "all in" for this imaginary journey!

Active Reading

Model active reading when you read with your child. Talk about what's happening as you're reading. Stop and discuss any interesting or tricky vocabulary words. Help your child make pictures of the story in his mind. Ask your child, "What just happened here? How do you think that character feels? Have you ever felt like that? What do you think will happen next?" Not only will this develop your child's comprehension, but critical thinking skills as well.

Tell Me About It

After a read aloud, one of the best and easiest ways to check for understanding is to ask your child to summarize what the book was about in their own words. You can ask a question or two to help your child clarify her thinking or to add more detail.

Phonemic awareness activities

Rhyme time

“I am thinking of an animal that rhymes with big. What’s the animal?” Answer: pig. What else rhymes with big? (dig, fig, wig)

Body Part Rhymes

Point to a part of your body and ask your child to think of a rhyming word. For example, what rhymes with hair? (bear). What rhymes with eye? (pie) What rhymes with head? (bed). Make it more challenging by asking for two or three rhyming words. Nonsense words count, too!

Read books that play with sounds:

Try these books featuring rhyme, alliteration, and more:

- All About Arthur (An Absolutely Absurd Ape)
- Animalia
- Buzz Said the Bee
- Catch a Little Fox
- Each Peach Pear Plum
- A Giraffe and a Half
- The Hungry Thing
- Jamerry
- See You Later Alligator
- Sheep in a Jeep

Clap it out

Practice listening for syllables. Explain to your child that syllables are the big chunks in words as you say them: some words have one syllable (hat), some have two (apple), and some have three or more (banana). You can actually feel syllables! Have your child put her hand under her chin and say the word slowly so your child can feel when their mouth goes down. Be sure to explain that each time the chin goes down, they are saying another syllable or part of the same word.

Think of everyday words your child knows (for example: apple, baby, toothbrush). Tell your child that you’ll both clap the number of syllables in each word. Show them how to clap one time as you say each syllable: /ap/ (clap) /ple/ (clap). Try it with more words. Kids also love clapping their name!

Tongue ticklers

Alliteration or “tongue ticklers” — where the sound you’re focusing on is repeated over and over can be a fun way to provide practice with a sound. Try these:

- For M: Miss Mouse makes marvelous meatballs!
- For S: Silly Sally sings songs about snakes and snails.
- For F: Freddy finds fireflies with a flashlight.

“I Spy” first sounds

Practice beginning sounds with this simple “I spy” game at home, on a walk, or at the grocery store. Choose words with distinctive, easy-to-hear beginning sounds. For example, if you’re in the bathroom you can say, “I spy something white that starts with the “s” ssss sound (soap).”

Sound Scavenger Hunt

Choose a letter sound, then have your child find things around your house that start with the same sound. “Can you find something in our house that starts with the letter “p” pppppp sound? Picture, pencil, pear”

Phonics activities

Alphabet Scavenger Hunt

Be sure your kindergartner knows all of the uppercase and lowercase letters. One fun and easy way to practice is to pick up a favorite read aloud book and have your child find each letter in the print, in alphabetical order. Ask your child if some letters are harder to spot in every book and guess why that might be.

Grocery Store Literacy

Choose a letter as you're walking into the store. Make a game of finding things in the store that start with that letter. For example, for the letter "p" you could find peanuts, popcorn, pineapple and pizza. Emphasize the letter "p" and the sound it makes with each of your "p" words.

Trace and Say

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Your child can trace on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar. Next, see if your child can trace a simple two- or three-letter word (it, at, sat) and sound it out.

Fridge Fun

Magnetic letters can provide lots of easy phonics practice right in your kitchen. For an alphabet refresher, ask your child to arrange the letters in alphabetical order. Next, ask your child to pick out a letter, think of a simple three- or four-letter word that starts with that letter, and spell it out on the refrigerator. Can your child think of more words to spell with that first letter? Finally, see if your child can change one letter in the word to make a new word.

Scrambled Words

Draw three boxes side by side on a piece of paper. Using magnetic letters or letters written on paper, scramble the letters of a simple three-letter word (big, bug, top, ran) under the boxes. Have your child unscramble the letters and place them into the correct box.

Extra, Extra!

Ask your child to find and cut out all the words in a newspaper or magazine that she can read. Glue or tape them onto a piece of paper and practice reading them together.

Dig into Decodable Books

Through read alouds, kindergartners should be exposed to a wide range of books that introduce them to rich vocabulary and story structure. But there is also a role for decodable books to help your child practice beginning phonics skills. Decodable books contain a high percentage of words with predictable letter-sound relationships.

Sight words

Sight words are common words kids can recognize instantly without sounding them out. Many sight words are tricky to read — they aren't spelled the way they sound so they are difficult to decode.

Sight word Spy

Tell your child that sight words are "hiding in plain sight" everywhere around us. Your child's "mission" is to spot the sight words out in the world (in the grocery store, on a sign, cereal box, or movie poster) and announce "aha, I found you!" This silly game can get your child excited about recognizing words — as well as a boost of confidence from knowing how to read them.

Fluency Activities

Choose the Right Books

Help your child choose books that he can comfortably read. The “five-finger test” is a useful guideline for beginning readers. As your child reads, count the number of words he cannot read per page. In general, there should be five words or fewer that give your child trouble on each page. If a book contains several pages on which you count more than five words that they can’t read, consider reading that book to your child until they develops more reading skill.

Listen every day

Once you’ve found a collection of books that your child can read, listen to your child read every day. Be patient — new readers often read slowly! Offer help when your child gets stuck, and always give lots of praise and encouragement.

Reread favorite books

Building fluency takes a lot of practice! Keep a collection of books that your child can read quickly and easily. Encourage your child to reread favorite books over and over. With each reading, you may notice your child reading a bit easier, a bit faster, and with a bit more confidence and expression.

Read to your child every day

Model your own fluent reading as you read and reread books with your child. Even though your child may be able to read on her own, continue to find time each day to read books that are just beyond their reading level. Your child will enjoy listening to more advanced stories and will hear a great example of fluent reading — how you change your expression throughout a story and read with ease. Your child will hear how you raise your voice at the end of question sentence or how you change your voice for different characters.

Paired or “buddy” reading

Take turns reading aloud. You go first, as your reading provides a model of what good fluent reading sounds like. Then, ask your child to re-read the same page you just read. You’ll notice that your child’s reading will start to sound more and more like yours. Do this for several pages. Once your child is comfortable enough, and familiar enough with the book, take turns reading page for page.

Family Poetry Jam

Start with playful, rhyming poetry about topics that are familiar to your child like animals, food, and bedtime. Nursery rhymes and Mother Goose collections are early favorites. Read the poetry aloud slowly. Emphasize the sound of the words and the rhymes. Read dramatically to emphasize the breaks and phrasing of the poem. Have fun with the colorful language and word play. Reread the poem several times. Once a poem is familiar to your child, take turns reading! First you read one line or one stanza, and have your child read the next. See if you can do that while maintaining the rhythm of the poem.

Echo game

Choose a book at your child’s reading level and read a sentence aloud using appropriate expression and pauses. Then, have your child mimic you, reading the same sentence and using the same expression and pauses. Repeat the game every few paragraphs as you read through the book.

Choral reading

Choose a book at your child’s reading level and read a page or passage together in unison. You may have to slow your reading down a little to keep pace, but don’t slow down too much. Encourage your child to copy your pace and expression.

Reader’s Theater

You don’t need a script or costumes or props. Just choose a favorite picture book that your child is familiar with, and one that has lots of dialogue. Take turns reading the passages aloud, using dramatic voices and gestures appropriate to the story. This activity can get pretty silly right away, but it’s a great way to practice expression in reading aloud.

Record It

Another fun way to practice reading and build fluency is to have your child create her own audio books. This can be done simply with a tape recorder or audio recording feature or app on your phone. Your child might need a few “takes” to get his reading just right. Sharing your audio recordings with family and friends is a great motivator!

Vocabulary Activities

Read Aloud Everyday

Reading aloud to your child and having your child read books on their own is the best way to increase their vocabulary. Books provide words they won't encounter in everyday conversations as the language of books are more formal than talking. A great story also provides context and illustrations for learning a new word.

Bring in Nonfiction

Nonfiction and informational books (such as the DK Eyewitness series) offer young children a treasure chest of new and interesting words about our world. If the book has a glossary, spend some time discussing the words with your child, and as you read aloud stop as often as needed to think about new words and how they connect to what your child already knows about.

Explore your world

Visits to a museum, the zoo, the botanical garden, historical sites, and even your neighborhood park are terrific opportunities to introduce your child to new words. Spend some time looking at the signage and identifying new words, then connecting them to what you see right there.

“What’s Another Word For ...”

This game helps your child learn there's more than one word for everyday things. For example, look around you and say, “what's another word for couch?” (sofa). Or, if your child is doing a unit at school on weather, for example, ask “what's another word for hurricane?” (typhoon). You can extend the game by talking about how two things are similar but not exactly alike (small, microscopic). That helps your child learn about the subtle differences in related words.

Be a Word Detective!

Families can help develop word knowledge through simple conversations focused on words.

- Start at the root. Begin with a simple root word, such as push. Ask your child to come up with words they know that contain that word, such as pushing, pushed, pushover, push-up. Talk about how all these words have some shared meaning related to the word push.
- Multiple meanings. Many words have more than one meaning. While sitting at the dinner table, choose a word and brainstorm as many meanings and uses for the word as you can think of. Some words to start with: spring, frame, check, light.
- Consider the prefix. Numeric prefixes like bi- and tri- are a part of many words' kids know and use. Discuss words like tricycle, triceratops, triangle. All these words share the prefix tri-, which means three. Can they develop a list of words that begin with the prefix bi- (like bicycle and binoculars)? This gives you a great chance to introduce new words, like bicentennial, bicep, biped.

Talk About New Words During Read Aloud

Talking to and reading with your child are two terrific ways to help them hear and read new words. Conversations and questions about interesting words are easy ways to get new words into everyday talk. “The book says, ‘The boy tumbled down the hill,’ and look at the picture! How do you think he went down the hill?”

Play Pictionary

Pictionary is one of the most engaging activities to teach vocabulary.

Comprehension Activities

Active Reading

Model active reading when you read with your child. Talk about what's happening as you're reading. Stop and discuss any interesting or tricky vocabulary words. Help your child make pictures of the story in his mind. Ask your child, "What just happened here? How do you think that character feels? Have you ever felt like that? What do you think will happen next?" Not only will this develop your child's comprehension, but critical thinking skills as well.

"I predict ..."

When you sit down for a read aloud, look at the book's cover together. Ask, "What do you think this book might be about? Why? Can you make some predictions?" Guide your child through the pages, discuss the pictures, and brainstorm what might happen in the story. Talk about any personal experiences your child may have that relate to the story.

Mind movies

When you come to a descriptive passage in a book, have your child close her eyes and create a mental movie of the scene. Encourage them to use all five senses. Read the passage over together, looking for details that bring the scene to life. Ask questions like, "How do you know it was a hot day? Which words help you understand that the child was lonely?"

Beginning-middle-end

This is a great way to see if your child understands the main parts of a story. After reading a book together, give your child three sheets of paper, with "beginning" on one sheet, "middle" on the second sheet, and "end" on the third sheet. Ask your child to think about the three parts of the story, and then draw what happened on each on the sheets. Arrange the sheets in order, left to right. What happens if you re-arrange the sheets? Does the story still make sense?

Tell me about it

After a read aloud, one of the best and easiest ways to check for understanding is to ask your child to summarize what the book was about in their own words. You can ask a question or two to help your child clarify her thinking or to add more detail.

Words, words, words

Be sure to include books with rich vocabulary in your read alouds and call attention to interesting words and phrases from the story. This may include repeated phrases or idioms (such as "get cold feet" or "I'm all ears"). Offer a kid-friendly definition and connect the new word or phrase to something your child already knows. Talk about how the author used language or words to make the text interesting, informative, funny, or sad.

Illustrated timelines

After reading a story, have your child create an illustrated timeline of events from the story. Tape together five sheets of paper along the 8-1/2-inch side to create one very wide sheet. To help plan the timeline, your child can add numbers that mark important points of the story. Then it's time to fill in the sequence of events with words and pictures. Once the timeline is complete, ask your child to re-tell the story — acting it out is okay, too! Variation: Create the timeline using Post-Its on a wall or outside using sidewalk chalk.

Comic creator

Lots of kids love comics and graphic novels. Help your child make a comic based on a favorite book — stories with action work especially well. Talk about what happened in the story, and help your child choose which event from the story that they want to draw. Ask your child to think about the beginning, middle, and end of the event. Using a ruler and marker, divide a paper into squares. Using colored pencils or fine markers, your child can begin the comic strip, drawing one scene per square. Don't forget to include captions beneath each drawing or in graphic novel-style speech bubbles! When the strip is done, ask your child to share her story.

Resources

- ✓ Florida Center for Reading Research
 - ✓ Florida Department of Education
 - ✓ Reading Rockets
 - ✓ Taylor County School District
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