Reading: Supporting Skills at Home

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Reading can be tedious and a struggle for all children at one point or another, but we all know that having grade-level literacy skills can help a child succeed in more than one academic area. Many parents have asked us “What can we do at home?” followed by “We don’t want to stress them or make reading not fun, but we really want them to succeed”. Here are a few ideas from the National Center on Improving Literacy on how to keep reading fun at home while building those essential literacy skills to help with reading growth.

Toddler/Preschool children:

- Nursery Rhymes, songs, poems
- Talk about your day, practice asking and answering questions
- Read books together

Elementary School children:

- Play word games and discuss the meaning of the words
- Ask questions before you start reading, while you are reading, and after, have the child practice asking you questions about the book
- Discuss your day, practice communication with asking and answering questions
- Help fill in background knowledge on a topic, research the questions your child has about the book

Middle School children:

- Play word games and discuss the meaning of the words
- Ask questions before you start reading, while you are reading, and after, have the child practice asking you questions about the book
- Discuss your day, practice communication with asking and answering questions
- Model good literacy, pick out a magazine together or find a fun topic to research, read the book together before seeing the movie

Technology can also help supplement to meet the literacy needs of your child. Check out the “Resources” section on the back to see a few examples.

Source: https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/supporting-your-childs-literacy-development-home
WHAT ARE THESE “PHONEMES” YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT?

A phoneme is the smallest “unit of sound”. Children are taught phonemes at the earliest levels of reading development. Phonics and phonemes are essential building blocks in developing readers.

“In phonics we learn to read the “pure sound” of a phoneme, rather than letter names. For example, the sound /s/ is pronounced ‘ssssss’ and not ‘suh’ or ‘es’.

Learning to read pure sounds makes it much easier for children to blend sounds together as they progress with their reading.” (The School Run, 2020).

This allows children to understand to true sounds that the letters make in words. As they continue reading, they learn to put these sounds together to read words.

For example, the word “cat” has 3 distinct sounds—/c/, /a/, and /t/. When you blend them together, you say the word “cat”. This blending of sounds becomes easier as children develop their reading skills. For more information, please see the link below.

Source: https://www.theschoolrun.com/what-is-a-phoneme

RESOURCES

*Non-Fiction for Kids—Reading Rockets has some great tips and tricks for integrating more non-fiction and information text into your reading routines.

https://www.readingrockets.org/books/nonfiction-for-kids

*PBS Kids—Fun reading games and videos! https://pbskids.org/games/reading/

*Reading Is Fundamental—Discover online resources to support your child’s favorite books. Activities, puzzles, videos, and much more.

https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/parents

*K-12 Reader—Great resource for reading skills, spelling, vocabulary, and writing.

https://www.k12reader.com/

*Jump Start—An online collection of reading games for children of all ages, great resources for parents, too!

https://www.jumpstart.com/parents/games/reading-games

COMMON READING QUESTIONS:

Q: WHAT TYPES OF BOOKS SHOULD I HAVE AVAILABLE FOR MY YOUNG READER? DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS?

A: To keep your child engaged with reading, you should keep a wide variety of books on hand, and make sure to include books on topics that interest him. In your book collection, keep books that your child currently enjoys so he can read them over and over again (repeat readings are great — they help kids feel comfortable with the story and begin "reading" it along with you!). You should also add new books regularly, and make them a little more advanced than his current collection. He will let you know — probably through a lack of interest — when a book is too difficult. Picture books are good because they allow you to point out words and help him begin to recognize letters and their associated sounds. Pictures also give clues to the story for young children who are just grappling with language-learning, but if he can follow the plot of a book without pictures, that’s wonderful! The important thing is to go at his pace, but maintain a rich and varied literary environment.

https://www.readingrockets.org/helping/questions/kidsbooks

Q: IF A CHILD IS READING ALOUD AND IS MAINTAINING MEANING, IS IT NECESSARY THAT I CORRECT EVERY WORD HE MISREADS?

A: The answer to this question depends on the context in which the child is reading. If he is reading in front of a group, or for pleasure, or for the purpose of appreciating literature, then you should NOT correct every mistake. During these activities, students are developing a love of reading, and as long as the meaning is preserved, they should be free to experience the “flow” of a good story.

In an instructional context, you may want to gently correct accuracy mistakes, but try to limit this to activities in which the main instructional goal is accuracy. You can build activities into your curriculum that focus on this specific skill.

Giving students the opportunity to read without the pressure of perfect accuracy will invite children to read more – and that is how they will improve!

https://www.readingrockets.org/helping/questions/fluency