

Parent Tip Packet: How do we help?

Aspect of Learning	School Focus	Home Focus
Reading	<p>Reader’s Workshop: Develop student’s skills and sense of her/himself as a reader. Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn strategies for comprehending increasingly difficult texts (e.g. questioning, connections, visualization) ▪ Practice skills and strategies to advance to the next reading level (Fountas & Pinnell) ▪ Develop their interests in reading. Students learn to select independent texts of interest to read. ▪ Build an understanding of genre (non fiction, fiction, poetry) and story elements <p><i>At-Risk Readers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop rules and strategies for decoding English text ▪ Develop comprehension skills using controlled texts and texts of interest 	<p>At home, support the same goals by following these tips:</p> <p>Tip 1: Talk with your child</p> <p>Tip 2: Make reading FUN</p> <p>Tip 3: Read every day</p> <p>Tip 4: Listen to books together</p> <p>Tip 5: Set an Example</p> <p>Tip 6: Visit the Library/Help pick out books</p> <p>Tip 7: Talk about Books</p> <p>Tip 8: Listen to your Child Read</p> <p>Tip 9: Show that you Value your Child’s Efforts</p> <p><i>At-Risk Readers</i></p> <p>Participate in homework from “The Castle.” Celebrate milestones!</p>

Word Work (Spelling)

Spelling and Word Work

- Because students are at all different levels, we differentiate the program so that students are working on spelling patterns that they need to work on.
- Rather than focus on memorizing a list of new vocabulary in isolation each week, we teach students strategies that can help them use context and learn spelling patterns that can be applied to many different words.
- Our program uses real life contexts to identify words that students need help with.

Key Resources: Diane Snowball, *Spelling K-8*; Bear, Templeton, & Johnston, *Words their Way*

Support Word Work at Home

Tip 1: Wonder about words.

Tip 2: Notice patterns.

Tip 3: Model strategies spellers can use to spell words they don't know.

READING TIPS:

Tip 1 – Talk to Your Child

Oral language is the foundation for reading. Listening and speaking are a child's first introduction to language. Talking and singing teach your child the sounds of language, making it easier for him or her to learn how to read.

Here are some things you can do to help your child build an appreciation for words and language:

- Tell family stories about yourself, your child's grandparents, and other relatives.
- Talk to your child as much as possible about things you are doing and thinking.
- Ask your child lots of questions.
- Encourage your child to tell you what he or she thinks or feels.
- Ask your child to tell you about his or her day – about activities and games played.
- Be patient! Give your child time to find the words he or she wants to use.
- Sing songs, such as the alphabet song, and recite nursery rhymes, encouraging your child to join in.
- Play rhyming and riddle games.

Tip 2 – Make Reading Fun

Reading aloud can be a lot of fun, not just for parents but for all family members. Here are some ways to get the most out of reading to your young child:

- Read with drama and excitement! Use different voices for different characters in the story. Use your child's name instead of a character's name. Make puppets and use them to act out a story.
- Re-read your child's favorite stories as many times as your child wants to hear them, and choose books and authors that your child enjoys.
- Read stories that have repetitive parts and encourage your child to join in.
- Point to words as you read them. This will help your child make a connection between the words he or she hears you say and the words on the page.
- Read all kinds of material – stories, poems, information books, magazine and newspaper articles, and comics.
- Encourage relatives and friends to give your child books as gifts.
- Take your child to the library and look at interactive CD-ROMs and the Internet, as well as books.
- Subscribe to a magazine for your child. He or she will love receiving mail!

The more you enjoy the reading experience, the more your child will enjoy it.

Tip 3 – Read Every Day

Children love routine, and reading is something that you and your child can look forward to every day. By taking the time to read with your child, you show him or her that reading is important and fun to do.

Try to read with your child as often as possible. It's the best thing you can do to help him or her learn at school! It also allows you to spend time together in an enjoyable way and to build a strong and healthy relationship.

- Start reading with your child when he or she is very young.
- Set aside a special time each day when you can give your full attention to reading with your child.
- Choose a comfortable spot to read, where you can be close to your child. Make it your "reading place"! Set aside a special shelf in that area for your child's books.
- Choose a variety of books.
- Vary the length of reading time according to your child's age and interests. For young children, several short sessions (of 10 minutes each) may be better than one long session (of 30 minutes).
- Read slowly so that your child can form a mental picture of what is happening in the story.
- Praise your child for his or her ideas and participation!
- When you and your child are away from home, take along books, magazines, and books-on-tape for your child to read and listen to.
- Keep reading to your child even after he or she has learned to read. By reading stories that will interest your child but that are above his or her reading level, you can stretch your child's understanding and keep alive the magic of shared reading.

Tip 4 – Listen to Books Together

Listening is a critical literacy skill and a skill that will help your child across the school day. Listening to audiobooks is a great way to build listening stamina and skill. It also helps readers become more fluent, as they hear the narrator's expression.

- Listen to audiobooks together in the car—they are perfect for car trips!
- Listen at night before bed, or other times you read together. Listen a few times through and talk about what you have heard.
- Visit the library and look for audiobooks that are of interest to your child.
- Turn an iPod into a learning tool! Go to www.AudibleKids.com to download from thousands of audiobooks titles. Children can listen to AudibleKids.com audiobooks on the computer, on an iPod or mp3 player or on a CD. The site is designed so that students can browse, sample and select titles of interest to them. Parents can also browse lists of award-winning books and favorite lists of teachers and parents on the network.
- Listen and read along. Many of the titles on Audiblekids.com are "Audible Enhanced" which means that they come with visuals and text for students to follow as they listen on the computer. You can always borrow the books you will listen to from the library and read along.

Tip 5 – Set an Example

As a parent, you are your child's most important role model. If your child sees you reading, especially for pleasure or information, he or she will understand that reading is a worthwhile activity.

You can also share many daily reading activities with your child. Here are some ideas:

- Read recipes, food labels, schedules, maps, instructions, and brochures.
- Read traffic signs and signs in stores and restaurants.
- Look up information in cookbooks, manuals, phone books, atlases, and dictionaries.
- Read greeting cards, letters, and e-mail messages to and from relatives and friends.

Tip 6 – Visit the Library/Pick out Books

You and your child can use levels to help find “just right books”. The 5-finger rule is another good tool. We want to teach students how to choose books that: they will enjoy and find interesting; they can read with confidence and competence; will increase their content knowledge; will expand the range of genres that they read and enjoy; and will help them understand themselves and their world.

- Encourage your child to pick out books that he or she will enjoy
- Prompt your child to think about his or her independent level, but let interest drive his or her selection.
- Encourage your child to use the “5-Finger Test.” Sometimes it is difficult to know if a book is going to be too easy or too hard by just looking at it. The Five Finger test is one way to “test” a book before you spend too much time with it and get frustrated. To read more, visit <http://www.booknutsreadingclub.com/fivefingertest.html>
- If you are concerned that a child is over or under challenging him or herself, contact the teacher. He or she can follow up as well.

Tip 7 – Talk About Books

Talking about the books you read is just as important as reading them. Discussing a story or a book with your child helps your child understand it and connect it to his or her own experience of life. It also helps enrich your child's vocabulary with new words and phrases.

Here are some ways to help your child acquire skills in comprehension, reasoning, and critical thinking:

- Ask your child about the kinds of books he or she would like to read.
- Talk to your child about your favorite books from childhood, and offer to read them.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and to comment on the story and pictures in a book – before, during, and after reading it.
- Look at the cover and the title of a book with your child, and ask your child what he or she thinks might happen in the story.
- Encourage your child to think critically about the story. Does he or she agree or disagree with the author? Why?

- Think out loud about the story as you read, and encourage your child to do the same. For example, ask, "Does this make sense? Why or why not?"
- Give your child time to think about the story, and then ask him or her about it again a few days later.

Tip 8 – Listen to your child read

As your child learns to read, listen to him or her read aloud. Reading to you gives your child a chance to practice and to improve his or her reading skills.

As you listen to your child, remember that your reactions are important. Above all, listen without interrupting. Be enthusiastic and praise your child as often as you can. If possible, be specific with your praise so that your child knows what he or she is doing well.

- Show your child that you are enjoying the story by indicating interest and by asking questions.
- Give your child time to figure out tricky words, and show your child how he or she can learn from mistakes.
- Try to have your child read aloud to you at times when there will be no interruptions.
- Make sure that your child selects books that aren't too difficult. Don't worry if the books your child chooses are a little easier than the ones he or she reads at school.
- Encourage your child to "listen" to his or her own reading. Listening will help him or her hear mistakes and try to fix them.
- Take turns reading with your child, especially if he or she is just beginning to read, or try reading together.
- Talk about a story after your child has read it, to make sure that he or she understands it.

Don't forget to encourage your child to read on his or her own!

Tip 9 – Show that you value your child's efforts

Remember, your child needs to know that you value his or her efforts. Children learn to read over time, with lots of practice and support from parents and teachers.

Here are some ways you can show your child that you have confidence in his or her ability to learn:

- Be aware of your child's reading level, but use that information in a positive way. Choose books and activities that are at the right level and that will help your child improve his or her reading skills.
- Be patient and flexible in your efforts to help your child.
- Show your child that you see him or her as a growing reader, and praise his or her efforts to learn.

WORD WORK AND SPELLING TIPS

Tip 1: Wonder about words.

- Rhyme with your child.
- Stop to notice and wonder about new words as you read. Make a note of words that are similar to ones that challenge your child.
- When you find an interesting word, look for smaller words within the word.
- Look at a word together. Talk about the sounds and the spelling and how they are related.

Tip 2: Notice patterns.

- Look for words that have a certain pattern. For example, look for words that have “gh” in them.
- Look around the words and write down the names of 15 things. Write down some of the commonalities about those words (sounds, spellings, etc.)
- When you stumble on a word, write down 5 more words that sound like that word. Are they all spelled the same? Are there differences? What can you learn from that about how words are spelled?

Tip 3: Model strategies spellers can use to spell words they don't know.

- Sound out a word.
- Ask yourself, what other words sound like this word? Do I know how to spell those words? Maybe that is a starting place.
- Have a dictionary or the Internet dictionary link handy. Model using the dictionary

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

100 School-Home Links activities. The activities are organized by reading and literacy skills appropriate to this grade. Under each specific skill, there are varying numbers of activities to help children develop their ability to read and write. From the U.S. Department of Education.

2nd grade: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CompactforReading/table2.html>

3rd grade: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CompactforReading/table3.html>

Scholastic.com. The “Parents” section of the Scholastic website offers tips for parents, has online games parents can play with their children, downloadable activities, and book suggestions. <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/parentsHome.jsp>

National Center for Family Literacy. Click on the “Family Literacy & You” tab for articles and tips on how to help your child become a better reader.

www.familit.org

Colorin Colorado. Visit www.colorincolorado.org to find practical, research-based information on how to help English language learners read...and succeed. Tips are helpful for all parents.

AudibleKids.com Visit www.audiblekids.com to learn more about how you and your child can search, browse and download audiobooks.

Tips for Parents

A Parent's Guide to Reading with Your Child

Reading together is magical. As you discover adventures between the covers of a book, you also discover things about each other. And with every page you turn, your child expands vocabulary, comprehension, reasoning, grammar and other skills.

Here are 10 tips to help you bring up a book lover.

1. **Create Reading Rituals.** Read together every day, starting when your child is a baby. Set aside a special time and place to read together. Let your child know that reading is important to you, and that your child can expect to enjoy this time and place with you on a regular basis.
2. **Get Close.** When you cuddle with your child while reading a story, your child begins to associate reading with a sense of security. Children learn better when they feel safe.
3. **Provide Sound Effects.** Use silly voices and sounds to keep your child interested in the story. Hearing different sounds in language also helps your child develop critical listening skills. Try singing, too!
4. **Make Connections (1).** Help your child connect the words you are reading and the words she is hearing. Follow along with your finger as you read to show how print moves from left to right. Point out the pictures in the book and talk about what you see.
5. **Make Connections (2).** We're surrounded by letters and words. Children need experience with all kinds of print — from shopping lists to the Internet to street signs. Point out letters and words around you. Connect the letter symbol to the name of the letter.
6. **Talk About It.** When reading or telling a story, pause to talk to your child about it. Ask him open-ended questions, like "What do you think will happen next?" or "What would you do?" Put things in your own words to help make the story clearer for your child.
7. **Read It Again.** Children need to hear favorite stories over and over. This helps them recognize and remember words. It also helps them learn how to predict what's coming next. Most importantly, as kids become familiar with a story, it gives them confidence about reading and improves their comprehension and background knowledge.
8. **Keep It Active.** Let your child touch and hold the book. Ask her to help you turn the pages. And you don't always have to sit when you read or listen to a story. Try clapping out a fun rhyme or dancing to a silly poem.
9. **Be Creative.** Too tired to hold a book? Tell a story that you know, or make one up together. Making up a story with your child stimulates creativity. It's also a nice change.
10. **Follow Your Child's Pace.** Don't push your child to read beyond his ability. Choose books suited to his age and development, and let him choose books that are interesting to him. Encourage your child's reading, and congratulate him when learns a new word or masters a new skill.

Tips for Parents

Helping School-Age Children Become Better Readers

When parents are involved in their children's learning, children are more successful! The National Reading Panel summarized research related to five critical areas of reading:

1. **Phonemic Awareness:** the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words
2. **Phonics:** instruction that teaches the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language
3. **Fluency:** the ability to read quickly and accurately with expression
4. **Vocabulary:** the words we know and use to communicate effectively
5. **Comprehension:** the ability to understand what is read

Providing language and literacy support to school-age children helps connect learning at school to learning at home. When school and home learning are linked, children are more focused and confident as they learn to read.

Here are a few strategies to help parents support their children's acquisition of reading. The progression of strategies flows from simple to more complex as children become more competent in their abilities.

Phonemic Awareness

- Sing songs, say chants and poems, and share nursery rhymes
- Ask your child to think of words that begin with the same **sound**
- Say a word; ask your child to say words that **rhyme** with that word
- Clap **syllables** in words and names — "How many syllables in hippopotamus?"

Phonics

- As you read with your child, point to letters and ask him to name them
- Make an alphabet book together with drawings or illustrations for each letter
- Encourage your child to write notes, lists, letters to family and friends, and stories
- Play word games — "I spy something that starts with the letter M. What is it?"

Fluency

- Read aloud to your child, changing your voice for different characters in the story
- As you read, pause and show your child where sentences begin and end
- Read books that your child is interested in, taking turns reading a page; when your child slows down or makes mistakes, encourage her to read the page again
- Encourage your child to read lots of different things — books, magazines, newspaper, letters, signs

Vocabulary

- Talk with your child often about family events and interests, their friends, and activities at school
- As you read or talk with your child, draw his attention to new words and what they mean
- When reading with your child, ask him to describe the pictures or illustrations and then point to words in the text that match his descriptions
- Write new words in a list, display the list at home, and encourage your child to use these new words again and

again when talking and writing

- Look up new words in the dictionary or thesaurus to find out what they mean

Comprehension

- Encourage your child to tell stories; ask her questions that focus on the characters, the message, and the beginning, middle and end of the story
- When reading with your child, encourage her to predict what might happen next in the story; discuss events in the story and compare to her own experiences
- Read many different kinds of books (poetry, fiction, nonfiction), magazines, and newspapers
- Visit interesting places (museums, zoos, parks, cities), do things together (cooking, shopping, sports) and then talk about the experience with your child
- Encourage your child to write for different purposes (lists, letters, stories, reports) and different audiences (family, friends, general public)
- After your child has read a book, ask him to talk about the meaning of the book

Written by the National Center for Family Literacy.

Tips for Parents:

Everyday Literacy Experiences: Talking, Listening, Reading and Writing

The people we encounter, the places we go, the things we do and the experiences we have — all impact our lives. Children’s lives need to be filled with literacy experiences if they are to become successful readers and writers.

The more words children hear, the more words they recognize and understand as they read. Learning vocabulary helps children become better readers. Talk to your child — anytime, anywhere, during any activity. Have conversations during mealtimes and throughout the day. Talk about something you did today and ask your child to tell you something about her day.

Learning to listen helps children listen to learn — an important skill for school success.

Ask your child to close his eyes and identify the sounds he hears as you open and close a window, put food in the cat’s dish, or dial a number on the telephone. Sit in the park or at the playground with your child. Make a list of the sounds you hear and compare them. Did you each hear different things?

Creating a special reading place in your home shows children that you value reading. Find a quiet well lit spot and make it comfortable with pillows and chairs or sofas just right for cuddling. Your child might want to create her own space with stuffed animals, favorite books and toys. This may be a corner in your family room or a special area in her bedroom where she can go and read.

Books should be easy to reach and include a wide variety of types and topics. It’s nice for children to own a few of their favorite books for reading again and again, but you can bring home armfuls of books of all kinds from the library. Read with your child every day.

Introduce your child to a variety of printed material — books, magazines, newspapers, recipes, letters and notes, advertisements, and church bulletins. This helps children understand there are many purposes for reading.

To become better readers, children also need opportunities to write. And practicing their writing actually helps them become better readers. Keep plenty of writing materials — pens, pencils, markers and materials on which to write — available. Give your children a reason to write. “Let’s thank Grandma for your birthday present. What are some things you would like to tell her?” “Let’s send Tommy a birthday card. You can pick it out, write ‘Happy Birthday’ and sign your name.” “Would you write Dad a note telling him we have gone to the store and will be right back?”

Manipulating sounds in words — listening to and creating rhymes, making up nonsense words and playing word games — improves children’s reading, comprehension, spelling and writing. Invent some rhymes. "Cows say moo, ghosts say boo, I love you and your brother, too." Talk about what makes words rhyme — the ending "parts" of the words sound the same.

Talking, listening, reading, writing and playing with language are easy skills to practice with your child.

Tips for Parents

Just a "Literacy" Minute!

Just a minute! How many times do parents respond to their child's request with that well-worn phrase? And rightly so. A minute buys enough time to complete a task, take a deep breath, or prepare a response to a child's question that caught you by surprise. But a minute also can be used to increase vocabulary, expand reading skills, and add an extra dose of fun to an otherwise routine day.

You may feel that there isn't enough time to add more activities to an already packed twenty-four hours. But these ideas take just a minute.

While you're waiting for the bagel to toast, have your child look for the letter *B* on the cereal box. Count as many as possible before the toaster pops. Or find items in the room that begin with the same letter sound as her name.

Choose a letter of the day. Look for the chosen letter in any printed materials you see: the newspaper, labels at the grocery store, street signs, billboards, or advertisements on TV. Make up a silly sentence using only words beginning with the letter of the day (Cats can cuddle. Dogs don't drive. Amy always acts awake.)

Singing songs is certainly a literacy activity. So sing on! Try this twist. Sing short songs like *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* several times, leaving off the last word each time until there are no words left. This activity always produces giggles from children and parents alike.

Play "Guess Who." Describe a cartoon character, celebrity or historical figure. Allow a guess after each detail is disclosed. Expand your child's vocabulary by using unusual words, and then explain their meaning. Take turns. Listen carefully to your child's descriptions, especially his choice of vocabulary. Encourage him to paint a picture of the character with his words. At the end of the game, compliment him on any unusual or new words used.

While stuck in traffic, describe the view from the car by taking "word turns." The activity is as easy as the name suggests. Parent and child each add a word until the scene is described. (A...yellow...convertible...with... a... golden... retriever... in... the... back... seat... is... next... to... our... car.) This activity works well on a walk around the block or while waiting in line at the check-out counter, too.

Talk to your child about his day. Pretend to be a television reporter. Try questions like "what was the most surprising (curious, funny, eventful) thing that happened today?" Or gather news for the local paper. "If your day's activities were an article in the newspaper, what would the headline be?" You are giving your child opportunities to increase vocabulary, recall and reflect, and you are receiving a more detailed version of the time you spent apart. Be prepared to answer the same questions. You and your child will begin looking for events to report to each other.

Make literacy a part of your child's daily routine. After all, it only takes a minute!

TIPS FOR PARENTS TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN LOVE READING

Taken in part by Mrs. Hickey from the International Reading Association's Tip Sheet for Parents.

- Read every day to or with your children. You could be sitting in the same room together reading different books - the sheer act of making time for reading as a family sends a wonderful message.
- Before reading to your child(ren), read or listen to preview the book so you are familiar with it and your reading is smooth and dramatic.
- When reading to your children, read books that you like. If you like a book, you will read it with more feeling, which passes on the love of that book to your child. Children love to know and understand what you loved to read as a child.
- Don't be afraid to start reading a book aloud to your child and then hand it to him/her to finish. Choose a book that will make them want to continue.
- Let your child read one of his/her favorite books to you. Start with picture books and move up to chapter books.
- Keep newspapers, magazines and other materials around the house for your child to read as s/he passes through a room.
- Cook with your child, reading recipes aloud.
- Plan weekly menus with your child, reading recipes aloud and allowing him/her to choose meals for certain days of the week according to the recipes.
- Read a book and then watch the movie it is based upon. Talk about the ways the movie deviated from the book or ways it was true to the book. Discuss the art of creating a movie out of that particular book.
- Place a reading light in your child's room so s/he can read at any time.