

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Green Meadow Elementary School
East Greenbush Central School District

Family impacts love of books

When you read with your child, especially with excitement, you show how much fun reading is. That's a gift that lasts a lifetime! To do this:

- **Admire the book.** Together, notice the cover, pictures and other features. Who wrote it? Who illustrated it? To whom is it dedicated?
- **Take your time.** Instead of flying through the pages, turn them slowly, building anticipation. What will happen next? Can your child guess?
- **Talk about it.** What did your child think of the story? Can she relate to it in any way? Discuss what you might read together next—perhaps another book by the same author.



Getty Images/Stockbyte

Source: Pam Allyn, *What to Read When: The Books and Stories to Read with Your Child—and All the Best Times to Read Them*, ISBN: 978-1-5833-3334-1 (Avery, www.penguin.com).

*“Books are the quietest and most constant of friends:
They are the most accessible and wisest of counselors,
and the most patient of teachers.”*

—Charles W. Eliot

Graphic organizers should inspire, not intimidate

Making a graphic organizer sounds complicated, but it's an easy way for your child to organize information for reports or essays. All it requires is a sheet of paper. Three types are:

1. **Fact and opinion.** Your child should choose a main topic and write it down. Then divide the page into two columns: facts and opinions. As your child reads, he can add to each column.
2. **Description wheel.** Have your child draw a wheel and write a topic (such as “George Washington”) in the middle. On each spoke, he can write something descriptive (such as “first president” or “born in 1732”).
3. **Ice cream cone.** Write a main topic on a cone shape. Then add a scoop for each detail. Suggest that your child color them in with his favorite “flavors.”

Source: “Graphic Organizers,” Education Place, www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer.

Solve reading issues together

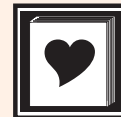


Teachers are experts at helping children through reading assignments. If your child has trouble reading at home, ask the teacher about:

- **Tricks** that can help your child figure out words, such as looking at nearby pictures, thinking of similar words and noticing familiar parts of words.
- **Reading goals** for your child. Discuss how to choose reading materials for your child—and the best ways to support his success.

Source: “Helping your child learn to read—A parent's guide,” Ontario Ministry of Education, www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/earlyreading/index.html#teacher.

Need a confidence boost?



Does your child struggle with reading, but long to “finish a book” by herself? Ask the librarian about traditional-length books that are easy to read. Finishing a “big-kid” book is a milestone. It can build confidence for new reading challenges!

Check book's vocabulary level



Reading books with too many new words can make reading frustrating ... and that prevents reading! When your child considers a new book, try the “five word” rule. If three to five words are unfamiliar to her (per page), read the book together. More than five unfamiliar words per page means the book is too hard right now. Read it out loud to her instead.

Source: Hal W. Lansie, *Read Well, Think Well*, ISBN: 978-15-98697827 (Adams Media, www.adamsmedia.com).

Serious skill can become serious fun for your child

You want your child to read more—but you refuse to nag her about it. (Good decision!) Try alternatives such as:

- **List her interests**, and then go to the library to scout out irresistible books on those subjects.
- **Place exciting reading materials**, such as books, comics and magazines, all around the house.
- **Read aloud** to get your child excited about reading. She may even pick up a book you started together.
- **Suggest that your child** read to a younger relative or friend. This gives her a chance to take pride in her skills.
- **Make reading a treat.** Let your child stay up later to read. Or read a joke book at dinnertime. Show that reading is as enjoyable as it is important.

Source: "Children Who Can Read, But Don't ...," Reading is Fundamental, www.rif.org/parents/articles/ChildrenWhoDontRead.mspx.

New Year's traditions can spark a year of reading

Would your child enjoy learning about how people in different cultures celebrate their New Year? Does he know about eating grapes at midnight? Or rice cakes as the first meal of the New Year? Some New Years begin in the spring, or depend on the moon's cycles. Read about New Year traditions this January. Consider books like:

- **Shanté Keys and the New Year's Peas** by Gail Piernas-Davenport (Albert Whitman & Company).



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- **New Clothes for New Year's Day** by Hyun-joo Bae (Kane/Miller Book Pub).
- **Hiss! Pop! Boom! Celebrating Chinese New Year** by Tricia Morrissey (ThingsAsian Press).



Q: I keep hearing the term "reading genres." What is a genre, exactly?

A: Books are divided into two major groups: fiction and nonfiction. Beyond that, there are many "genres"—or types—of books. At school, kids learn about popular genres, such as historical fiction, poetry, biographies, mysteries, autobiographies and more. Talk with your child about them. Which ones interest her most?

Source: "Reading Genre Definitions," Book Nuts Reading Club, www.booknutsreadingclub.com/genelist.html.

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.



For lower elementary readers:

Fireflies by Julie Brinckloe (Aladdin). This touching story about catching fireflies—and deciding whether to let them go—is perfect for family reading and discussion.

What's New at the Zoo? by Suzanne Slade (Sylvan Dell). Animals and addition come together naturally in this zoo adventure. Throughout the book, kids can solve simple problems, find a hidden red balloon and more.

For upper elementary readers:

Extra Credit by Andrew Clements (Simon & Schuster). Abby may have to repeat the sixth grade—unless she takes on an extra credit project that involves finding a pen pal in a foreign country.

Baseball Great by Tim Green (HarperCollins). Josh is a great baseball player—but can he handle the pressure in the big leagues? And is it worth it?

Library books promote responsibility, independence



Using the library is an exciting responsibility. Help your child succeed at:

- **Taking** care of books at home. Have your child put them in a special spot, such as on a bedside table, where they'll be handy and safe.
- **Returning** books on time. Have your child write due dates on the calendar. Or make regular trips to the library to return books and check out new ones.

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