

THE READING CONNECTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE READING CONNECTION

Children live in a world filled with many opportunities for learning; in school, at home, within the neighborhood, and on family outings. The more children experience, the more they learn.

Recognizing that you, as parents, are the first and the most important teachers children have, our school has provided you with THE READING CONNECTION, a series of handouts to assist you in helping your child in his/her reading experience. These handouts include reading tips, suggestions, and descriptions of the reading process.

It is the school's goal to provide the best possible education for your child. To do this we must realize that the rate of growth and development varies from child to child. While each child is unique, it is important to understand that children share many common characteristics. Children are:

- * physically active, growing rapidly, developing muscular coordination
- * eager to learn
- * imaginative, curious, and creative; sometimes mixing fact and fantasy
- * eager to please, but often focus on their own needs and desires
- * responsive to praise, sensitive to criticism
- * limited in ability and attention span

We hope that THE READING CONNECTION will be of assistance to you for the coming school year. You are always welcome at school to observe, make suggestions, or ask questions about how you can assist with your child's educational progress.

UNDERSTANDING VOWELS: A, E, I, O, U

The development of a child's reading skills is dependent on how well words can be sounded out. This process is referred to as phonics. The five vowels play an important role in the use of phonics.

There are many rules that affect the use of vowels in words. The following information on vowels can be used to help your child sound out new words.

Vowel letters represent more than one sound. The visual clues to the sound are position and the letter or letters which follow.

When a vowel is the final letter in a very short word, such as **no** and **he**, or the final letter of an accented syllable such as **na'tion**, it is usually long.

When the only vowel is not the final letter in a short word or an accented syllable, it is usually short, as in **at**, **cap**, and **cot'ton**.

When a one syllable word ends in e, the first vowel is usually long, as in **name** and **home**.

An old saying states, "As two vowels go walking, the first does the talking." This can be seen in words such as **boat**, **beat**, **bait**, and **pied**.

Included below is a vowel sound chart to be used when a child encounters a word which is difficult to sound out.

Short Sound

a as in cat
e as in set
i as in it
o as in hot
u as in hut

Two Vowels Forming Compound Sound

ou as in pout
ow as in cow
oi as in coin
oy as in boy

Long Sound

"Says its name"

a as in case
e as in Pete
i as in time
o as in hole
u as in cute

Special Vowel Sounds

a followed or preceded by **w, u, ll, or l** has the sound of **aw** as in saw;
ew and **ue** in blew or blue has the **oo** sound in moon;
oo as in book;
y and **w** have the sound **e** at the end of words as in snowy and lady

R Sound Controlled-Vowel Followed by R

a as in arm
e as in her
i as in bird
o as in or
u as in hurt

Schwa Sound of Vowels in Unaccented Last Syllable

a as in about
e as in taken
i as in pencil
o as in lemon
u as in circus

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MAKE READING A SUMMER ACTIVITY

Summer vacation is about to begin and your child will be looking for activities to do during those days off. One of the best activities a child can take part in is summer reading.

Reading is a skill, just like swinging a baseball bat, shooting a basket, or riding a bike. It requires practice. Summer reading can help students of all ability levels keep their skills sharp so that when school starts in the fall they will be ready.

The key to summer reading is enjoyment. If a child views reading as a relaxed and pleasant activity, chances are reading will become an activity of choice.

Parents can help by encouraging reading and praising a child for reading achievements. Here are some basic things that you can do to help your child enjoy reading during summer vacation.

PROVIDE BOOKS THAT A CHILD WILL ENJOY

The best way to encourage summer reading is to provide books that relate to a child's interests and reading ability. Librarians can suggest books that children of different ages enjoy. Teachers can also be a good source of information. One point to remember; most children like easier books to read during the summer. Don't select or demand that a child read a difficult book during free time.

MAKE READING A RELAXED ACTIVITY

Reading should be a fun activity for a child. Encourage your child to read for pleasure, but don't force reading over a long period of time. Fifteen to thirty minutes of reading a day during the summer will be sufficient to help your child keep reading skills sharp.

READING AS A FAMILY

Try to establish a schedule where the entire family can sit down and read together. You might want to take this time to share a story or ask questions about what is being read by the family.

JOIN A SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Public libraries offer summer reading programs for all age levels of students. Seek out your library to see what is offered for children. If the library does not have a reading program established, suggest that they start one.

Summer is a time for fun and relaxation for a child. It is also a time when your child can enter new worlds of adventure and learning by reading.

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UNDERSTANDING THE READING PROCESS

Your child's success in school depends largely on the ability to read. If a child learns how to read well, school success usually follows.

You can help your child become a good reader, but before you can do that, it is important that you understand the reading process. There is no uniform definition of reading. However, most educators agree that reading is decoding the printed visual symbol into the spoken word to convey meaning of what is being seen.

Reading is a visual act. Although the reader's eyes may seem to glide smoothly over the lines during reading, they are actually sweeping from one fixation to the next. Reading only occurs during these fixations. If the reader fails to recognize what is seen in one fixation, he/she tends to look back. Encountering too many unknown words may cause a great number of regressions and create faulty reading habits.

Reading is an auditory process. Children must be able to hear the different sounds letters produce. Knowing the letters and the sounds they represent plays an important part in learning to read.

Reading is a thinking process, involving words and the ideas and meanings that those words convey.

Reading is a developmental process that contains five stages of skills and abilities associated with good reading. These stages are in logical order, and understanding these stages will help you understand what reading involves.

- * **PRE-READING:** This stage takes place from birth to age five or six. The infant listens to and reacts to the spoken word. He/she imitates sounds, learns some words, and uses short sentences by the age of three or four.
- * **READING READINESS:** This stage takes place in kindergarten and first grade when the child is just beginning to learn to read. Reading readiness involves the child's ability to distinguish sounds, to make discrimination in visual symbols, to express simple ideas, and to follow simple oral directions. It is very important that children have a good background of experiences at this stage.
- * **BEGINNING READING:** Most students reach this stage in the second half of the first grade. The student learns such word elements as initial consonant sounds, some blends, simple endings, consonant subtraction, and basic comprehension abilities. As the child acquires a basic stock of sight words, reading begins from a series of graded texts. Once the child completes a graded text, it will be time to move on to the next reading level.
- * **RAPID READING:** This reading stage is usually reached in the second and third grades. The child is now mastering more advanced skills. The ability to decode unfamiliar words and more advanced comprehension skills are both being developed.
- * **USING READING AS A TOOL:** This stage usually begins at the fourth grade level and continues into the next two grades. Here the child is reading to learn. The mechanics of reading have now been mastered and the child is ready to tackle content subjects such as science and social studies.

Understanding these stages is very important, but not as important as understanding your child's stages. We all know that children learn at different rates and reading is no exception. Don't panic if your child is not quite on the level you have been told to expect. Give your child time to grow. If you notice specific problems, then seek help from the school.

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READING FOR THE OLDER CHILD

Learning to read doesn't stop when your child grows older or after the fundamentals of reading have been mastered. Reading growth continues as your child grows. It is important that a child is provided with positive reading experiences suitable for his/her age. Reading mastery occurs when the fundamentals are practiced on a regular basis.

Here are some ideas that you can follow to ensure that your child continues with positive reading experiences and strives to become a better reader.

PROVIDE READING MATERIAL FOR YOUR CHILD

It is essential that you provide your child with good quality reading material. Help your child select books and magazines that are both interesting and challenging. Use the public library! This is the least expensive way to provide reading material for your child.

Budget some special money to buy books or subscribe to magazines. Always remember to select a book or magazine that is at an appropriate reading level and is of high interest.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD READ

Take time to listen to your child read. Set aside a certain amount of time each day, approximately ten to fifteen minutes, to have your child read to you. This will provide the opportunity to detect specific areas of difficulty.

Here are some points to remember as your child reads to you:

- * Let your child read silently over the material before reading out loud.
- * Briefly discuss the material that your child reads to you.
- * Make your child's reading a fun, enjoyable experience.

Your child will learn the basic techniques of reading in school. What your child will need most from you is reinforcement of those reading skills at home. Your child needs to practice reading every day. The school day just isn't long enough to be able to provide the needed time for practice. Your role at home is an important asset in your child's reading development.

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READING AND COMPREHENSION

Reading is a complex process which involves not only the ability to identify words but also the ability to comprehend what is read. Comprehension occurs on different levels ranging from the simple recall of facts to critical evaluation of material. As students are exposed to more information, their need for critical reading skills increases.

Critical reading skills become important to students as they mature and learn to function effectively in society. Students need to acquire skills in making judgments, drawing conclusions, and evaluating the material to which they are exposed. These skills need to be developed as children progress through their school years.

There are four levels of comprehension: literal, interpretive, critical, and creative. Although these levels may sound confusing at first, many of these skills are learned at an early age and in a logical progression.

LITERAL COMPREHENSION

Literal comprehension is the simplest level and involves the recognition of stated facts. The student is merely asked to recite information that has been read. Some skills of literal comprehension include:

- * Identifying specific facts.
- * Associating quotations with speakers.
- * Arranging ideas or events in sequence.
- * Identifying stated main ideas, main events, etc.
- * Identifying specific words.

INTERPRETIVE COMPREHENSION

Interpretive comprehension requires the student to draw conclusions and/or inferences using the information being read. In other words, the student must read between the lines to arrive at the implied meaning. Some skills at this level include:

- * Determining cause and effect.
- * Making generalizations.
- * Anticipating outcomes.
- * Speculating on what happened between events.
- * Summarizing material read.
- * Classifying ideas.
- * Comparing and contrasting.
- * Identifying character traits.

CRITICAL COMPREHENSION

Critical comprehension is based on the information received at the first two levels. The student must evaluate and judge the information presented against an established standard. The student reacts to what was read by asking questions about the material and author. These skills include:

- * Distinguishing fact from opinion.
- * Detecting and analyzing propaganda.
- * Drawing conclusions.
- * Making judgments.
- * Determining accuracy of material.
- * Determining the author's bias and purpose.
- * Judging quality, value, and consistency.
- * Judging reasonableness and relevancy.
- * Determining the reliability of the information.

CREATIVE COMPREHENSION

Creative comprehension requires the student to react on a personal level to material being read. Some skills include:

- * Generating new ideas.
- * Internalizing new information and extending its use.

Many factors influence a student's ability to read. As you can see, reading comprehension is just one of those factors.



TIPS TO IMPROVE READING

Here are some tips using the four "Teaching of Reading" approaches that you can use to help your child become a better reader.

SIGHT APPROACH

1. Review the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary and/or Dolch Noun list with your child.
2. Make flash cards using the Dolch lists and have your child practice the words.

PHONICS APPROACH

1. Make sure your child knows the alphabet.
2. Make flash cards with the letters of the alphabet on them. Have your child state what letter is seen.
3. Have your child state what sound each letter makes.
4. Use pictures to help your child learn beginning and ending sounds.

MULTISENSORY APPROACH

1. Read to your child and have him/her repeat what you have read.
2. Let your child help you cook by following directions in a cookbook.
3. Let your child make out a shopping list and help you with the shopping.
4. Go on a family trip and encourage your child to help with the planning.

LANGUAGE-BASED APPROACH

1. Ask your child to retell a story that has been read to him/her.
2. Using a tape recorder, record your child reading a story and then listen to it.

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HOW TO MAKE YOUR CHILD A BETTER READER

The reading process includes many fundamentals that children learn while in school. The teacher provides children with instructional methods that will make them successful readers. Parents can increase that success by providing extra help for children.

There are two areas that should be considered in helping children increase reading skills. They are reading to children and teaching children new words. Let's take a closer look at these two ideas.

READING TO YOUR CHILD

We all enjoy having stories read to us. If you don't believe that statement, just take note of all the books on audio cassette being sold today. There is nothing better than having an interesting, exciting, and fast moving story read to us.

Listening to a story being read not only provides a child with entertainment, but it also helps the child's comprehension skills by teaching better listening skills.

Here are some suggestions to follow when you read to your child.

- * Pick a regular time for reading to your child. Make a schedule that can be realistically followed.
- * Select a time when you will be free from interruptions.
- * Find a comfortable and quiet place to read.
- * Read with expression, but don't get carried away.

TEACHING NEW WORDS TO YOUR CHILD

No one knows every word in print. Children at every age level will encounter words that they will not understand or be able to pronounce. You can be a great asset to your child by teaching him/her new words.

There are certain words that children must recognize by sight in order to become good readers. It is a fact that there are about 220 words that make up 70% of everything a child reads while in elementary school. Practice these words with your child. Once your child has mastered these sight words, then you can venture on with new words.

Establish a game to learn a new word every day. Have your child keep a new word log. Your child can be given a new word to look up and then jot down the meaning and pronunciation in the word log. Once the meaning has been mastered, have your child use the new word in a sentence. Using the word will confirm that the child actually understands the word.

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DIRECTION WORDS TO PRACTICE

This list of words appears frequently in reading, math, and other school textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets. These words deal with following directions. If your child does not know these words and their meanings, it may cause difficulty in completing assignments.

You can assist the school by checking to see if your child knows the words on this list. If there are words which he/she does not know, it is important that you set up a time to practice these words with your child.

DIRECTION WORD LIST

above	across	add	after	alike
all	alphabet	also	another	answer
around	back	before	began	begin
beginning	behind	below	between	blank
box	bring	circle	color	count
crossout	cut	date	directions	dotted
down	draw	each	end	ending
erase	example	false	fill in	find
first	fold	follow	fourth	from
glue	grade	group	hold	homework
how	in between	in front of	just	know
last	left	line	long	make
many	mark	match	middle	miss
missing	more	most	must	name
need	no	notebook	number	one
only	other	over	page	paint
pair	paper	part	paste	pencil
picture	place	practice	print	put
question	read	rhyme	rhyming	right
ring	row	same	say	scissors
score	second	sentence	set	short
should	show	some	sound	space
spell	spelling	start	stop	tablet
than	third	top	trace	three
true	twice	two	under	underline
what	when	where	which	who
why	word	work	workbook	worksheet
write	yes			

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WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S READING

Here are some ways that you can help your child improve reading skills.

1. Build up expectations. A child should expect to do well.
2. Listen to your child read.
3. Find books that deal with your child's interests.
4. Encourage visits to the library and bookstore.
5. Encourage your child to share books with friends and relatives.
6. Help your child select a variety of books, including some that are not difficult.
7. Make magazines that interest your child available.
8. Use the newspaper for informal reading and to practice information finding skills.
9. Refer to reading material to answer your child's questions concerning specific problems, such as how to fix a bike, fly a kite, etc.
10. Make reading fun; avoid creating pressure to read the "right" books or make all reading into schoolwork.
11. Give the pronunciation of words when asked by your child.
12. Don't make your child look up every word he/she doesn't know in the dictionary.
13. Don't insist that your child pronounce every word exactly right if he/she is getting the correct meaning.
14. Be as positive as possible; offer praise.
15. Work closely with the school if your child is having a problem with reading.
16. Obtain suggestions from your child's teacher or reading specialist for materials and methods that can be used to help your child overcome deficiencies.
17. Know your child's reading level.
18. Select printed material that is appropriate to your child's reading level.
19. Reinforce vocabulary by repetition.
20. Have your child tell you the ending of the story which has just been read. See if your child has understood what has been read.

Becoming a good reader takes time and a lot of practice. Be patient with your child.

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HOW DOES A CHILD LEARN TO READ?

As parents, you don't have to be experts on the many theories about how a person learns to read. What you need to know and understand is that teachers are trained to use several methods and that no one method is best for every child.

There are four common approaches that teachers use to teach children how to read. These approaches are: sight, phonics, multisensory, and language-based. Almost all teachers use a combination of these methods in their classroom.

Here is a summary of each method and how it pertains to the teaching of reading.

SIGHT METHOD -- The sight approach is sometimes referred to as the whole word or look-and-say method. Words are introduced to the child within phrases, sentences, and stories. The teacher tells the child new words as they are gradually introduced in context with known words.

The goal of this method is for the child to recognize and respond to familiar words without hesitation. One reason that sight skills are important is that about 220 words make up over 50% of everything that is written in the English language. This is true for materials written for adults as well as those for children.

PHONICS METHOD -- In the phonics approach, the sounds that correspond to letters of the alphabet are taught. In the English language, a letter or group of letters represent one or more given sounds. Children are taught how to combine what they have learned about sounds with the letters used to spell words.

A major purpose of the phonics method is to equip children with a set of skills that will enable them to unlock words that are unfamiliar to them. But, one must remember, the phonics approach alone is not enough. Many words in the English language are spelled in ways that do not follow usual sound and letter relationships. Other methods or clues, including reasoning, must be applied.

MULTISENSORY METHOD -- Another method of teaching a child to read involves stimulating three or more of the senses. Here the teacher will incorporate the senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, and in some cases smelling and tasting.

The teacher may ask the student to **see** a particular word printed in a book or written on the chalkboard; **hear** the word as spoken by the teacher; say the word and **hear** it again; trace the letters with pencil, crayon, chalk, or even fingers and **feel** the word; finally, use the word in a sentence to demonstrate understanding and to hear the word in context. Teachers using this approach occasionally include the senses of **smell** and **taste** to add variety to the learning process.

LANGUAGE-BASED METHOD -- The final approach is known by various names, one being the language-based method. The teacher uses a combination of the three methods already described to build word recognition skills, but emphasizes the relationships between thought and language, both oral and written.

Language-based techniques include relying on students experience of stories and listening to stories. The students experience is related to how well the student can dictate the story. Listening to a story can be done with a tape recorder or someone else reading the story to the class.

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A READING CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

How well are you helping your child with reading? Here is a simple checklist to see how you are doing. Put a **check** before each true statement.

1. I read something every day. Every day my child sees me getting pleasure and information from reading.
2. I have a library card and I use it.
3. I take my child to the library on a regular basis.
4. I read aloud to my child frequently.
5. I often ask my child to tell me a story or describe something he/she has seen. I listen while my child shares the days activities.
6. I encourage my child to write letters, notes, and lists.
7. I take my child on brief excursions and trips to expose him/her to many different experiences and build vocabulary.
8. We play word games and listening games so that my child will learn to listen attentively.
9. I buy books and magazine subscriptions for special occasions.
10. There is a dictionary in our house.
11. When a question arises in our family, we have a habit of looking for information or checking facts in the dictionary or encyclopedia.
12. I praise my child for efforts and accomplishments.
13. My child has definite responsibilities and obligations around the house which are expected to be fulfilled.
14. I show my child that I am sincerely interested in the school and in his/her academic progress.
15. I make sure my child has a good breakfast and arrives at school on time.
16. I limit my child's television viewing and monitor the shows being watched.

How well did you do? The more true statements you check, the more you are helping your child become a better reader.

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DOS AND DON'TS FOR PARENTS

Parents actions make a definite impact on children's school success. As is true in all aspects of decision-making, there are positive and negative actions which can be taken. Here is a list of dos and don'ts, (positives and negatives), that might assist parents in helping children do better in school. They are:

DO

- * Visit your child's classroom on a regular basis.
- * Ask the teacher how you can help your child be more successful.
- * Give your child the chance to read out loud from the materials he/she brings home from school.
- * Provide a place for your child to read and study in comfort.
- * Encourage reading for enjoyment.
- * Help with homework when your child is having difficulty or asks for assistance.

DON'T

- * Nag your child or pressure him/her to achieve.
- * Forget to praise your child's accomplishments.
- * Compare your child's achievements with those of other children. Your child has the right to be an individual, not a carbon copy of an older brother, sister, or neighbor.
- * Allow your child to spend time watching TV when homework is not getting done.
- * Set low standards or low academic expectations for your child.

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TEN COMMITMENTS FOR PARENTS

1. I will read to my child daily.
2. I will help my child start a word collection of at least one unknown word daily.
3. I will listen to my child read daily.
4. I will help my child write down stories, poems, and sayings that he/she creates.
5. I will set an example for my child by reading books, newspapers, and/or magazines daily.
6. I will praise my child for at least one success daily.
7. I will arrange for my child to use the library and visit bookstores to select his/her own books.
8. I will help my child find a listener to read to.
9. I will allow my child to buy books and educational games and spend time reading and playing together.
10. I will listen to my child daily to learn about his/her progress in school and learning to read.

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USING THE BASIC SIGHT VOCABULARY LIST

About 70 % of all words used in school books, library books, newspapers, and magazines are made up of the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary List of 220 words. They are referred to as "service words", (pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and verbs), words that cannot be learned through the use of pictures. Since these words are used to hold thoughts together, they must be recognized at a glance before a child can read with confidence and understanding.

Here is the list of the 220 sight words. These words are divided into the levels at which they should be recognized by a child. Practice these words with your child. Make learning these words fun for your child by designing flash cards and using them in a game setting.

PREPRIMER

a	and	away	big	blue	can	come	down
find	for	funny	go	help	here	I	in
is	it	jump	little	look	make	me	my
not	one	play	red	run	said	see	the
three	to	two	up	we	where	yellow	you

PRIMER

all	am	are	at	ate	be	black	brown
but	came	did	do	eat	four	get	good
have	he	into	like	must	news	no	now
on	our	out	please	pretty	ran	ride	saw
say	she	so	soon	that	there	they	this
too	under	what	was	well	went	what	white
who	will	with	yes				

FIRST GRADE

after	again	an	any	as	ask	by	could
every	fly	from	give	going	has	her	him
his	how	just	know	let	live	may	of
old	once	open	over	put	round	some	stop
take	thank	them	then	think	walk	were	when

SECOND GRADE

always	around	because	been	before	beat	both	buy
call	cold	does	don't	fast	first	five	found
gave	goes	green	its	made	many	off	or
pull	read	right	sing	sit	sleep	tell	their
these	those	upon	us	use	very	wash	which
why	wish	work	would	write	your		

THIRD GRADE

about	better	bring	carry	clean	cut	done	draw
drink	eight	fall	far	full	got	give	hold
hot	hurt	if	keep	kind	laugh	light	long
much	myself	never	only	own	pick	seven	shall
show	six	small	start	ten	today	together	try
warm							

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PARENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO READING DEVELOPMENT

Here are some ideas on how you can influence the reading development of children.

1. Maintain a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere at home where each child is made to feel important and wanted.
2. Provide children with plenty of learning experiences. Take them to the zoo, fire station, farm, historical places, etc.
3. Be enthusiastic about your children's school and school activities.
4. Give children a chance to talk about themselves and their interests.
5. Answer children's questions in a simple, direct manner.
6. Praise children for their accomplishments and encourage them to try harder when they fail.
7. Develop a feeling of independence by giving children responsibilities.
8. Let children see you reading for enjoyment.
9. Provide materials similar to those used in school - glue, paper, pencils, rulers, scissors, etc.
10. Help children learn how to follow directions and pay attention.
11. Show children that books are not the only kinds of reading material available. Have newspapers and magazines around the house to read.
12. Follow your children's progress in school with interest.
13. Do not burden children with detailed questions about their school activities.
14. Visit your children's school often for an objective report on their progress.
15. Continue your own learning. Be a reader yourself, and a model for your children.

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HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Parents are very important in the process of teaching children how to read. Numerous studies indicate that the amount of help and guidance that parents provide has a profound effect on a child's reading achievement.

Here are some guidelines to take into consideration as you help your child develop his/her reading skills.

They are:

- * Provide a variety of materials for your child to read. Include poems and prose, fiction and nonfiction, adventure, fantasy, fairy tales, myths, legends and folk tales.
- * Schedule a reading period each day. Make it a time for enjoyment and relaxation. It should be informal and last about a half-hour. During the reading period there should be no television, no tape player, and no radio.
- * Keep a close check on your child's attention span. As the year goes on, increase your child's reading time.
- * Do not make reading a punishment for misbehavior. This is the fastest way to destroy the positive effects of reading.
- * Use educational television programs to increase your child's interest in reading.
- * Encourage your child to: pursue individual interests, develop new interests through new experiences, and find reading material that will whet the curiosity and answer questions that stem from his/her interests.

You can be a positive contributor in your child's reading achievement if you will take the time to get involved.

Reading can be a fun-filled family activity. Take a few moments a day to make sure your child reads.

BASIC NOUN SIGHT WORDS

The following list of words, known by educators as the Dolch nouns, are used in school texts and library books enough that it is necessary for students to be able to recognize them by sight.

When working with your child with this list of words, it is suggested that you group them in a set of five or six words at a time. Also, grouping the words in a variety of ways is helpful until your child can recognize all of them without hesitation.

BASIC NOUN SIGHT VOCABULARY LIST

boy	girl	baby	cat	dog
ball	doll	toy	top	boat
hand	head	eye	let	feet
back	way	money	name	thing
letter	stick	mother	father	brother
sister	farmer	milk	corn	bread
cake	egg	bell	box	ring
car	shoe	coat	Santa Claus	Christmas
chicken	squirrel	good-bye	man	men
kitty	rabbit	fish	cow	pig
farm	horse	sheep	snow	water
wind	rain	sun	fire	table
floor	door	chair	bed	home
house	school	paper	street	flower
duck	nest	robin	bird	bear
time	watch	night	day	morning
picture	children	birthday	game	song
party	tree	grass	ground	wood
hill	window	garden	seed	apple

THE READING CONNECTION

WHAT IS READING?

We hear so much today about the value of reading that we sometimes lose track of what reading is. Research has provided us with five generalizations on what reading really is.

READING IS A CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS

Meanings constructed from the same text can vary greatly among readers because of differences in the knowledge they process. Research reveals that children are not good at drawing on prior knowledge, especially in a school setting.

READING MUST BE FLUENT

Readers must be able to decode words quickly and accurately so that this process can coordinate fluidly with the process of constructing the meaning of the text.

READING MUST BE STRATEGIC

Skilled readers are flexible. How they read depends upon the complexity of the text, their familiarity with the topic, and their purpose for reading.

READING REQUIRES MOTIVATION

Reading instruction can be boring, and certain aspects of the standard reading lesson are monotonous. Teachers who maintain high levels of motivation conduct fast-paced and varied lessons. Teachers whose classes are motivated are described as business-like, but supportive and friendly.

READING IS A CONTINUOUSLY DEVELOPING SKILL

Reading, like playing a musical instrument, is not something that is mastered once and for all at a certain age. Rather, it is a skill that continues to improve through practice.

THE READING CONNECTION

25 SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE YOUR CHILD A BETTER READER

1. Ask your child to find all the things in a room that begin with a certain letter of the alphabet.
2. Have your child find abbreviations in the Want Ads of the newspaper. He/she should be able to find their meaning in the Dictionary.
3. Using a telephone book is a good idea. Have your child write down the names of friends and relatives. Record the telephone numbers for a personal directory.
4. After your child reads a book, have him/her read a favorite chapter, funny part, or exciting part to you.
5. Have your child read headlines and short articles from the newspaper to you.
6. Use food advertisements to see if your child can find a food beginning with each letter of the alphabet.
7. Teach your child his/her full name, address, phone number, and birthdate, including the year.
8. Cut out pictures of squares, triangles, and circles. Let your child find household items with similar shapes.
9. Make labels for different items around your house. Attach the labels to the objects for your child to see.
10. Find words in a newspaper or magazine to cut out and make sentences with them.
11. Begin a "made up" story and let your child finish it for you.
12. Give a direction to your child and make sure he/she follows it. Then progress to two or three directions to follow in order.
13. Read labels on canned goods and cereal boxes with your child.
14. Teach your younger child a simple song and ask older children to help.
15. Teach your child the difference between fact and fantasy. After a story or TV program, ask if he/she believed the story, could it happen in real life, and why or why not?
16. Discuss things that go together such as; knife and fork, coat and hat, soap and water, etc.
17. Encourage your child to keep a diary. Write down daily activities, thoughts, and feelings.
18. Have your child do writing projects and then read them to you.
19. Cut out cartoons from the newspaper and make captions to go with them.
20. Cut up a comic strip and let your child put the sections back in the right order.
21. Encourage your child to write a letter to a friend or relative.
22. Make a blank calendar. At the end of each day, have your child fill in the weather or write down one exciting event that happened.
23. Keep a scrapbook. Cut out pictures and articles of special interest to your child.
24. Let your older children be the "teachers" and work with the younger children in the family.
25. Remember, there is no substitute for reading a good book to your child.

We suggest that you do as much with your child as possible. Allot time each day to spend with your child.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN MY CHILD DOESN'T KNOW A WORD?

Parents often wonder what to do when their children do not know a word in a sentence that they are reading. A general answer is to give several clues which will help a child identify the word without being told what it is. Caution must be taken so that it doesn't take too long to identify the word. If that happens, it is better to tell your child what the word is.

Here are some tips to help your child identify words they don't know.

- * Skip the word and let your child read the rest of the sentence to see if he/she can figure out the word by using the context of the sentence.
- * Start over and have your child work on the beginning sounds of the word. See if your child can decode the word by sounding it out.
- * See if you can come up with another meaning for the word your child is having trouble with. This is useful if the word is long or difficult.
- * Read the paragraph again and see if your child can use the context as a clue to the word.
- * Don't insist that every unknown word be spelled or sounded out correctly. Doing so will make your child lose his/her flow of thought and will reduce reading speed, rhythm, and smoothness.

Put these tips into practice when your child encounters a word he/she does not know.

THE READING CONNECTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING ALOUD

Research tells us that reading aloud to children is the most effective, easiest, and least expensive way to help them develop a love of books and reading. It also brings pleasure, encourages creative writing and discussion, introduces new words and complex sentence structures, develops a sense of story, and expands the horizons of a child's world.

When reading aloud to your child, choose a book that is of interest to your child. Read the book first yourself. If you are not sure of what to read, ask a teacher or librarian for recommendations. Pick up a Read Aloud List from your public library.

Picture books work well with wide age groups. Poetry books can be used during short reading sessions. Novels are best for one-on-one reading.

Here are some dos and don'ts to follow when reading aloud to your child:

- * Read whenever possible but **do** set aside a special time.
- * **Do** follow through with your reading.
- * **Do** stop at a suspenseful or exciting point in the story. This way your child will be looking forward to the next day's reading.
- * **Do** use expression and read slowly.
- * **Do** give your child something to do with his/her hands if he/she cannot sit still during the reading time.
- * **Do not** choose a TV tie-in book.
- * **Do not** keep reading a book that you or your child don't enjoy. Choose another one to read.
- * **Do not** use reading or sitting still to listen to a story as a punishment.

THE READING CONNECTION

MORE SIGHT WORDS TO PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD

After your child learns the 220 basic sight words, there are other sight words that are frequently used in your child's reading which can be reviewed.

The following list of sight words contains pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and verbs. These words are used often and can be included with the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary list that you are using with your child.

BASIC SIGHT WORDS BEYOND THE DOLCH 220 WORD LIST

afraid	also	another	asked
back	bad	began	bump
called	can't	color	coming
count	cry	dear	didn't
drank	each	end	enough
faster	few	fun	glad
got	grade	guess	happy
hello	hide	high	hurry
I'll	I'm	I've	large
laughed	leave	left	let's
linked	looked	lost	love
Miss	more	most	Mr.
Mrs.	next	nice	nine
number	o'clock	oh	other
outside	placed	played	quick
quiet	ready	sand	sat
seem	should	side	spell
stay	such	surprise	talk
time	told	took	until
wanted	wet		