



Supporting Early Learners

published by

Partners in Learning

Partners in Learning believes that children have the best possible chance to reach their full potential when educators and parents work in partnership to provide supportive learning environments.



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Issue One: Reading Experiences

Children benefit when they have supportive one-on-one help and encouragement from parents. Ten to twenty minutes a day provides amazing results! This can:

- inspire a life-long love for reading
- promote a sense of partnership between you and your children
- improve self confidence as children learn to read
- provide the practice necessary for children to move forward in reading
- motivate children to take on new reading challenges

Children learn to read in much the same way as they learn to ride a bike. They follow the '**I Do, We Do, You Do**' cycle of learning. Adults model and explain to children what they want them to do or learn. Adults and children then tackle the task together until children feel confident. Finally, children are able to do the task on their own. This cycle of learning is used with the three types of **Reading Experiences** described in this newsletter.

Three Types of Reading Experiences

Reading To Children: When you read out loud to children you are able to share text that is considerably beyond their reading level. These reading experiences introduce children to words, ideas, and information. It is an opportunity to share the joy of reading and have lively discussions. This is the '***I Do***' part of the learning cycle.

Reading With Children: When children need a little assistance to read text successfully you are there to help them when they are stuck on a word or confused about an idea. This is the '***We Do***' part of the learning cycle.

Reading On Their Own and Getting Better Every Time: Children need lots of opportunities to practice with text that is easy for them to read. This provides a solid base for future reading growth. As with learning any skill, practice leads to feelings of confidence and a readiness to try something harder. This is the '***You Do***' part of the learning cycle.

Tips for Reading To Children

Reading material for this experience can be at any level of difficulty; from very easy to quite sophisticated.

- Read daily to your child by choosing a time that suits your family schedule.
- Make this a joyful and relaxing experience in a comfortable and cozy place.
- Be playful, enthusiastic, and expressive as you read.
- To captivate your child's interest and activate prior knowledge, read titles and look at pictures before reading.
- Model a sense of curiosity and wonder about pictures and ideas as you are reading using prompts such as: I wonder why . . . Isn't this interesting . . . This makes me think about . . . or Wow . . .
- Be willing to stop for discussions and answer questions your child might have. This will happen quite naturally.
- Share ideas, feelings, and thoughts with your child and help make connections between their own life and what you are reading.
- Encourage your child to visualize and act out parts of the story. This helps the stories come alive.
- Use your finger to track words as you read. This reinforces reading left to right, top to bottom, and helps to develop the concept of matching the spoken word to the printed word. Sometimes children want to take responsibility for doing the finger tracking themselves.
- Consider using bookmarks and pointers to vary the tracking process.
- Don't discourage your child from asking to have their favourite stories read over and over again. When children no longer have to concentrate on the plot, they naturally focus on the flow of language and memorize words.
- Read what your child and you are interested in.
- Read a wide variety of material such as children's magazines, fact or information books, poems, story books, books with rhyme, fairy tales, and fables.

Tips for Reading With Children

Reading material for this experience should be with text that requires only a small amount of support. This promotes the growth of your child's reading abilities. Typically, this reading experience takes place when your child reads out loud to you.

The parent's role during a **reading with** experience is to share the enjoyment of reading. Be encouraging, supportive, and celebrate your child's reading successes.

- Short, enjoyable reading sessions are far better than overdoing it and risking a struggle or creating a negative experience.
- Some children like to read to themselves or to a favourite stuffy before reading out loud to a parent. This helps to relieve the pressure of a performance situation.
- When a child gets stuck on a word, it is most important to give the child 'wait time'. This gives them an opportunity to figure out words on their own. If the child's reading experience becomes increasingly difficult, consider taking turns reading line by line or page by page for a while. Also, unison reading or reading out loud together is another option.
- Readers use a combination of phonics, clues from pictures and text, as well as their own background knowledge to strategically figure out words they don't know. You can support your child by using one or more of the following prompts:
 - look at the pictures and make a good guess
 - try sounding it out and looking at word parts
 - guess the word using the first letter as a clue
 - read the sentence again and think about a word that would make sense
 - skip over the word and go on with your reading
- Once you have allowed your child 'wait time' and have reminded them to use one of the above prompts, simply tell them the word and carry on reading.

Tips for Reading on Their Own

The material for this reading experience should match children's independent reading ability. That is, they should be able to read the text with ease. If children choose something that is too difficult and it becomes frustrating, simply revert to '**reading to**' or '**reading with**'.

- Help your child understand that every time they read they will improve. Explain that reading is just like becoming skilful at their favourite sport or activity.
- Whisper or quiet out loud reading is common. Silent reading comes later.
- Set time aside for this kind of reading. Daily is best.
- Reading to a younger sibling or child helps children feel important and builds confidence.
- After a bedtime story, allow extra '**lights on**' time for reading or looking at books.
- Children love to have their own library card and participate in library events.
- Many children respond well to incentives such as reading charts with stickers.
- Some children like to make a collection of books they can read with ease and keep them in a special place.
- Look for opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate your child's reading successes.
- Put simply, the parent's role is to encourage independent reading, provide access to reading material, and ensure that there is both a place and time to read.

Parents Ask: How can I encourage my child to be interested in reading and choose books appropriate to all three reading experiences?

- Demonstrate to children that reading is an enjoyable activity by having a family reading time. Family reading time after dinner is a great way for families to encourage reading for leisure. Children love to feel they are doing something that adults do.
- Visit your local public library and make friends with the children's librarian. They are expert at matching books to an individual child's interest and reading ability. Children's librarians can also help you and your child select appropriate books for the three reading experiences: reading to, reading with, and reading on their own.
- Find out if your local library or bookstore offers events such as author visits. If possible, join in as a participant with your child.
- Consider subscriptions to magazines. Children love to receive something just for them in the mail.
- Take your child to a bookstore and let them choose their own book.
- Look for alternate reading opportunities such as computer programs and games.
- Match books to: real life experiences, movies, audio books, plays, and puppets or toys.
- Involve your child in the choice of what to read and when. This helps to develop a sense of responsibility and self direction.

Recommended Resource: www.reading.org

This is the website address for the International Reading Association. Visit this website and scroll down the left hand bar until you find **Information for Parents**. Follow the links to locate both their Teachers' Choice lists and Children's Choice lists. Each title is briefly described so you have an idea what the book is about. Currently, a podcast about choosing books is also available.

Information for Parents also has a section title: **Brochures**. You will be able to download the following: Getting Ready to Read, Supporting Your Beginning Reader, Writing Activities for Young Readers, What Kids Really Want to Read, Reading, Writing and Technology, and What is Family Literacy?

Numeracy: Counting is central to the foundational skills and concepts of numeracy. Take advantage of every day, real life experiences to encourage the language and knowledge of counting.

- Meal times: *"How many carrots do you have left?"*
- Calendar countdowns: *"How many sleeps until Halloween?"*
- Toys: *"Let's count your toys as we are putting them away."*
- Walking, skipping and hopping: *"How many hops is it from the kitchen to your bedroom?"*
- In the car: *How many red cars can you see on the way to the store?*
- Clocks and watches: *How many hours will it be until we go to soccer practice?*
- Money, laundry, and dishes all provide excellent sorting and counting experiences.
- Rulers, number puzzles, games, magnetic numbers, dice, cards, computer games, dominoes are all age appropriate items to provide counting experiences.