

Ten things you can do to help your child become a better reader.

Your role as a parent is a pivotal one in helping your child achieve success in reading, spelling, and writing at school. Here are some helpful tips that will help set your child on the path to word study success!

1. When reading to your child, point out patterns that occur across words: “Hey! The letter ‘s’ at the end of ‘cats’ changes the meaning of the word from one cat to more than one cat.” Encourage your child to look for other words with the same pattern.
2. When your child is reading aloud, encourage her to read as if she were telling the story to a very young child. This will help her to read with natural expression and fluency.
3. Do not allow your child to “guess and go”, that is to guess the identity of a word after sounding out only the first letter(s) of the word. When this happens, tell her to look at all the letters in the word.
4. When your child says he doesn’t know what a word is, don’t automatically read it for him. Ask him to look for common spelling patterns inside the word he doesn’t know: “Look! The letters at the end of this word (‘stall’) are the same letters at the end of ‘ball’. Use the word ball to read this rhyming word”.
5. Model reading of words using slow-motion talking, blending one sound into the next with no pause between sounds, e.g., “thhiiiiss” for “this”. Point to the corresponding letters as you say the sounds and pronounce the word naturally when finished.
6. Select books that match your child’s reading ability. Reading material that is too hard will cause your child to guess words. If your child habitually selects reading material that is too easy or doesn’t like to read this may be a sign of a reading problem.
7. Discourage your child’s focus on reading fast. Many schools regularly measure and emphasize the importance of reading rate, usually measured in number of words read per minute. Instead, encourage your child to focus on reading accurately. As children become more accurate readers, they become more fluent readers.
8. If your child habitually skips words or lines of text, encourage her to run an index finger under the line of print when reading.
9. When your child needs to read a long word, encourage her to chunk the word into syllables by focusing on vowel letter chunks in the word: “This word (‘computer’) has three chunks of vowel letters. Let’s read one chunk at a time: com-pu-ter”. If necessary, prompt your child to say the word several times, each time stressing a different syllable or changing a vowel sound from long to short (or vice versa) until the word “rings a bell” and makes sense in the context of what is being read.
10. Discuss new words and encourage your child to make up sentences using the new words. Using new words in different situations throughout the day helps improve a child’s vocabulary, comprehension, and knowledge of the world around him.



You can always get more involved!

Write to your school board about increasing word study instruction — a systematic way of learning, practicing, and applying knowledge about the sounds, letters, and meanings of spoken words — in the language arts curriculum.

Get remedial help for students who need it. Seek out specialists who use scientifically-based methods for teaching reading and writing and who emphasize spelling instruction: proper spelling instruction improves reading and writing ability!

Remember that **all children are entitled to succeed** — and the cornerstone of their success is their ability to read and write!

For more information on helping your child achieve reading, spelling, and writing success visit www.learningbydesign.com.



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