

# Family Literacy Handbook



Ideas to facilitate learning outside of the classroom and strengthen parental involvement for young readers.

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# What is early literacy?

As discussed in Honig, Diamond, and Gutlohn (2008), early literacy is best defined as a child's understanding of reading, writing, listening, and speaking before they are able to actually do so proficiently on their own. This understanding originates at birth and continues into their early years in the classroom as they begin to develop as a learner and reader. Encompassed in early literacy are the five major areas of reading which include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. As students grow in their understanding of those five key areas, it will allow them to build upon skills and become mature readers.



## What is included in this handbook?

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents with information and resources to help their children grow as readers at home, as well as encourage their involvement in their student's educational career. The information is meant to serve as supplemental material to what the parent might learn on their own or through school resources. The activities are meant to serve as examples of the types of things that can be done to strengthen and practice each of the main areas of literacy and reading instruction. The resources included should not be solely relied upon and should be used in addition to teacher or school recommendations.

I hope you enjoy this handbook and find the material to be encouraging, helpful, and rich in content.

Happy reading!







# The BIG Five!

Reading development is based on five key areas that are crucial for young readers to practice and build upon. In Roe, Smith and Burns (2009) the five key areas of reading instruction, otherwise described as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, are explained.

	What is it?	How can it be strengthened?
Phonemic Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The understanding that spoken language is made up of smaller units of sound.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read books aloud to them</li> <li>• Many picture books geared toward young readers contain features that allow children to hear the sounds of the language through rhyme, alliteration and assonance.</li> </ul>
Phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relationship between printed symbols and speech sounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonics can be taught through activities such as rhymes, word walls, chants, games and riddles.</li> </ul>
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of what words mean and how there are used within language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The best way for students to acquire new vocabulary is to make connections between new words and their background knowledge.</li> <li>• Vocabulary can also be taught through the use of things such as vocabulary notebooks, dictionaries, word webs, analogies, and by using context clues when reading.</li> </ul>
Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to read with good pacing, expression, speed, and accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency can be strengthened through repeated readings of the same text, using reader's theatre, listening to audio books, and partner reading.</li> <li>• The more comfortable students become with reading aloud and knowing what they should sound like, the more they will improve in their fluency abilities.</li> </ul>
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making meaning from what was read.</li> <li>• The ultimate goal of reading is to understand what was put forth in the printed text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehension can be strengthened through activities such as using graphic organizers to show relationships, main ideas, sequence of events and other story elements.</li> <li>• Comprehension can also be developed through the use of summarizing, developing a mental image, asking questions, making predictions, and making connections to prior knowledge.</li> </ul>

# Types of Involvement

There are many great ways for parents and students to get involved in the student's education. In her article, "School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the children we share" (2010), Joyce Epstein has explained the six major ways to become involved.

Type of Involvement	Practical Applications	How Students and Parents are Impacted
Parenting 	Educate parents on how to create an atmosphere where students can learn at home, as well as nutrition, and community programs and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students become more aware of the importance of school.</li> <li>Parents and students build better, more respectful relationships.</li> <li>Students build character traits.</li> <li>Parents gain a sense of support from other parents and teachers.</li> </ul>
Communicating 	Weekly folders sent home as a means to show parents student work and deliver current news.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and parents have a better understanding of what is expected at school.</li> <li>Better communication between parents, teachers, and students.</li> <li>Students can monitor their own progress.</li> <li>Parents can respond quickly to any issues the student may be having.</li> </ul>
Volunteering 	Spend time working in the student's school and/or classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students build awareness of their own talents and skills.</li> <li>Parents come to understand what is expected at school and what the teacher's responsibilities are throughout the day.</li> </ul>
Learning at Home 	Participate in family learning activities, through things like games, or trips to museums or libraries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have the opportunity to practice and improve their skills.</li> <li>Students begin to see their parents as a teacher figure.</li> <li>Parents have a heightened awareness of who their child is as a learner and what their ability levels are.</li> </ul>
Decision Making 	Becoming involved in the schools' Parent-Teacher organization, committees, or district level groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students learn that their opinions can be shared with peers, school staff, and parents, and that their votes matter.</li> <li>Parents come to know that they have a voice in decision making.</li> <li>Students and teachers become educated on school, district and state policies.</li> </ul>
Collaborating with Community 	Participation in the community that promotes learning, service, and/or building strong relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will strengthen skills through deepened experiences outside of the classroom and home.</li> <li>Parents will understand the contributions the community and the school make to each other.</li> </ul>

# Key Terms for Early Literacy

The following terms are important for understanding early literacy and the different components that it is composed of.

- **Assessment:** A method of collecting data from students as proof of their understanding of a concept or their current ability level (Roe, Smith and Burns, 2009).
- **Authentic learning experiences:** The ability for students to learn first-hand from real objects and elements in their environment, rather than from replicas or decorated surroundings (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005).
- **Comprehension:** The ability to form meaning from text for a specific purpose using the printed the material and the reader's prior knowledge (Tompkins, 2006).
- **Emergent literacy:** A term coined by Marie Clay, in which the understanding of literacy elements: reading, writing, speaking and listening, are all related; and a child's understanding of those areas increases based on their school, home and community experiences (Morrow and Grambrell, 2011).
- **Environmental print:** Print that is found naturally in an individual's surrounding environment. This includes things such as street signs, labels, billboards, product branding (Tompkins, 2006).
- **Family literacy:** The way in which parents, caregivers and other family members affect how young students learn how to read and write and their development of oral and written skills (Vacca, Vacca, and Gove, 2000).

- Fluency: The ability to read with proper pacing and expression along with good comprehension of what was read (Roe et al., 2009).
- High-frequency words: Words that occur most often in text (Bear et al., 2012).
- Literacy development: The different stages of learning the language (Vacca et al., 2000).
- Literacy: The cognitive skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking (Huisman, 2012).
- Parent involvement: The role a parent plays as an active participant in their child's education at the home and school level (Chin, 2004).
- Phonemic awareness: The knowledge that spoken language is made up of smaller sounds (Roe et al., 2009).
- Phonics: The relationship between letters and sounds (Vacca et al., 2000).
- Phonological Awareness: The understanding of sound patterns that make up words (Roe et al., 2009).
- Proficiency: Level of skill mastery based on a student's grade level (Chin, 2004).

# Phonemic Awareness and Phonological Awareness



# Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is identified by Roe, Smith, and Burns (2009) as the understanding that language is made up of a series of small units of sound. Parents can help their children develop their phonemic awareness by asking their children to:

- Identify, out of a set of words, those that begin with the same sound.
- Identify the initial and final sounds of a word.
- Combine sounds and blend them to create words.
- Segment a word into separate sounds.
- Use invented spellings to become aware of sounds that make up words they are trying to write.
- Read books that use rhyme, repetition, or assonance to draw attention the different sounds of the language.
- Sing songs, say riddles and recite poems that draw attention to different sounds of the language.



# Phonological Awareness<sup>1</sup>

Phonological awareness, as defined by Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn (2008), is the ability to understand and identify that spoken language is broken up into smaller units of sound. This area of literacy can be broken up into the following developmental levels: word level, syllable level, onset-rime level and phoneme level. Listed below are a few examples of activities that encourage development in each of the skill levels.

Word Level	Sentence Segmentation	Clap one time for every word you hear in the sentence.	Sentence given: "I love my mom" Correct response: 4 claps
	Blending	The student is given 2 words and they must put them together to make a compound word.	Word parts given: <i>sun flower</i> Correct response: sunflower
Syllable Level	Blending	The student is given a word that is broken into syllables and they must blend the parts to form the word.	Word parts given: <i>pock-et</i> Correct response: pocket
	Deletion	The student must be able to delete one of the syllables after being given the whole word.	Word given: <i>pepper</i> and told to delete the "er" Correct response: pep
Onset-rime Level	Generate Rhyme	The student is given a word and should produce a word that rhymes.	Word given: <i>ham</i> Correct response: jam
	Categorization	Given a set of three or four words, the student should decide which word does not rhyme.	Words given: hat, bat, run, rat Correct response: run
Phoneme Level	Blending	The student is given a word that has been separated into phonemes. They must combine the sounds to produce the word.	Phonemes given: /b/ /i/ /g/ Correct response: <i>big</i>
	Addition	The student is given a word and asked to make a new word by adding a given phoneme.	Word given: <i>lock</i> told to add /c/ Correct response: <i>clock</i>

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Honig, B., Diamond L., & Gutlohn, L. (2008). CORE Teaching reading sourcebook. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Berkeley, CA: CORE.

# Phonics

# Phonics Fun!

Simply put, phonics is the relationship between printed symbols and speech sounds. This relationship is crucial for children to understand as they grow and develop as young readers. The following activities from Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn (2008) are great ways to help strengthen your student's understanding of phonics at home!

## Word Sorts

Word sorts can be done two different ways, either as an "open" sort or as a "closed" sort. In an open word sort, students are given individual words on flash cards or strips of paper and asked to think of a way that they could separate these words into groups. The student is not given any assistance or clues as to how the words should be sorted. Once they have finished the adult will ask them how they sorted the words and what their reasoning was. This then allows the adult to segue into a mini-lesson on the particular phonics skill. Following the mini-lesson the adult can again ask the student to sort the words this time using the phonics skill that was discussed.

Example: The phonic skill focus is on short and long vowel sounds. The words given to the student are: *cat, ice, hog, bee, tune, rug, sit, name, beg, and soap*. During the open sort the child might sort them into two categories and explain that they sorted the words into 3-letter words and 4-letter words. The adult would then go on to show the student that some words have the long vowel sounds, while others have the short vowel sounds. They would practice saying the sounds aloud and come up with different words for each sound. Once the mini-lesson is complete, the adult would ask the student to sort the words again, this time making sure to sort them into a group with the long vowel sounds and a group with the short vowel sound.

## Elkonin Boxes

Elkonin boxes are a great way for students to see the sounds within in a word segmented into boxes. To begin you would tell the student that you are going to work together to spell some words. For example, you could spell the word *cat*. Together you would sound out the word, /cccccaaaaattttt/. Then mention that you hear three sounds in that word. You would then ask the student to look at the boxes in front of them. Similar to the boxes below:

--	--	--

As you sound out the word, point to the first box when saying the /c/ sound, the middle box when saying the /a/ sound, and the last box when saying the /t/ sound. Then ask the student to do the same. Show the student that each box stands for an individual sound and ask them to write the appropriate sounds in appropriate box.

c	a	t
---	---	---

After completing the first one together, you can move on to other words that follow the same word family or phonics skills that are of focus for that lesson.

### Building Words

Start by telling the student you will be building some words together. Ask them to read the word "take" which you have written on a dry erase board. Then say, *"change the 't' into a 'c' and ask: what is the new word?"* The student should respond with "cake". Then write the word "cake" on the dry erase board. Continue as the example shows below:

Say: *Change the "k" to an "n". Ask: What is the new word?* (cane)

Say: *Change the "c" to an "l". Ask: What is the new word?* (lane)

Say: *Change the "n" to a "c". Ask: What is the new word?* (lace)

Once you are done building the words. Ask the student to read all of the words written on the board. You can continue on with a new set of words.

# Using Environmental Print

Roe, Smith, and Burns (2009) describe environmental print as text that is frequently seen around a person. Environmental print is an especially great resource for children before they enter the classroom as a way to see textual elements such as word structure, spelling patterns, and the relationship to how they know the word is pronounced and how they see it in writing. Some examples of environmental print include:

- Product packaging
- Menus
- Advertisements
- Food labels
- Road signs
- Posters
- Company Branding

Environmental print is a great resource because there are an infinite variety of exposure possibilities in your child's everyday life experiences and of course, because it is free! Some ideas on how to use environmental print include:

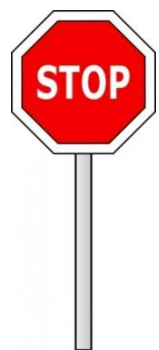
- Get creative when waiting to order at a restaurant and ask your child to hunt for words on the menu that starts with a particular letter or sound.
- Participate in a scavenger hunt with your child and tell them to look for objects around the house that have a certain word, letter or spelling pattern written on them.

You can even take advantage of car rides and use the "Car Bingo" activity as found on the following page!

# Car Bingo

Look at things outside of your car like road signs, billboards, buildings and other cars. Find a word that starts with the letter in the box. Once you find a word, write it down in that letter's box. When you get 5 words in a row you win!

R	N	G	K	U
L	A	C	Y	E
H	Q	W	B	I
J	X	F	V	T
O	M	S	L	D



# Vocabulary



# Building Your Child's Vocabulary<sup>1</sup>



Reading Rockets (2009) discusses how all parents want their children to do well in school. They mention that one parents can help their children is to help them build their vocabulary. Beginning readers use knowledge about words to help them make sense of what they're reading. The more words a reader knows, the more they are able to comprehend what they're reading or listening to.

Talking to and reading with your child are two terrific ways to help them hear and read new words. Conversations and questions about interesting words ("The book says, 'The boy **tumbled** down the hill,' and look at the picture! How do you think he went down the hill?") are easy, non-threatening ways to get new words into everyday talk.

Sharing a new word with your child doesn't have to take a long time: just a few minutes to talk about the word and then focus back on the book or conversation. Choose which words to talk about carefully – choosing every new word might make reading seem like a chore. The best words to explore with your child are ones that are common among adult speakers but are less common to see in the books your child might read.

When introducing new words to your young learner, keep the following four helpful hints in mind:

1. First, provide a simple, kid-friendly definition for the new word:  
***Enormous** means that something is really, really big.*
2. Second, provide a simple, kid-friendly example that makes sense within their daily life:  
*Remember that really big watermelon we got at the grocery store? That was an **enormous** watermelon!*
3. Third, encourage your child to develop their own example:  
*What **enormous** thing can you think of? Can you think of something really big that you saw today? That's right! The bulldozer near the park was **enormous**! Those tires were huge.*
4. Last, keep your new words active within your house. Over the next few days and weeks, take advantage of opportunities to use each new vocabulary word in conversation.

Take the time to share new words and build your child's vocabulary. You'll be **enormously** glad you did!

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/32444/>

Clipart from <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/staff/boldtkatherine/images/vocab.jpg>

# Talking Counts!<sup>1</sup>

As explained by Reading Rockets (2007), most words in a child's vocabulary come from everyday encounters with language. Children pick up language from books, media, and conversations with the people in their lives.

You can increase your child's vocabulary and background knowledge – two important pieces of the reading puzzle – by having conversations with them. Giving children a rich language environment is one of the best ways to build a foundation for reading success.

## With babies:

- Talk to them about what you're doing so they can begin to connect words with concepts.
- As your baby begins to speak, start asking, "What's that?" when pointing to objects or pictures. Elaborate on their simple answers as a way to have them listening to more words. "Yes, that is a banana! It's yellow and smooth."

## With young children:

- Talk about the things you see in your neighborhood, on trips around town, or on television. These conversations help build a child's understanding of her world.
- When reading, pause to ask questions or comment on the story. Ask, "Why do you think he did that?" or "What do you think is going to happen next?"
- Use interesting and new words with your child. For example, "This cookie is *scrumptious*! It is really good!" or "I can see you're *reluctant* to leave, but we can come back tomorrow."
- Tell your children stories from your own life, or about the day they were born. This helps develop their personal and cultural identity.



It doesn't matter what language you use – a rich language environment creates better readers!

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/15340/>

Clipart from <http://www.clker.com/cliparts/f/0/4/0/13011454361973456359cartoon-family-holding-hands-hi.png>

# Fluency

# Fluency Builders<sup>1</sup>

Fluency is a student's ability to read quickly and accurately (Roe, Smith & Burns, 2009). In order to build and strengthen a student's fluency the following can be practiced while reading at home:

- Provide children with opportunities to read and reread a range of stories and informational texts.
- Introduce new or difficult words to children, and provide practice reading these words before they read on their own.
- Include opportunities for children to hear a range of texts read fluently and with expression.
- Periodically time your child's oral reading and record information about their accuracy and rate. It is important to list words they read incorrectly, how many words they read correctly in one minute and whether they read with expression.
- Model fluent reading, and then have your student reread the text on their own.
- Use reader's theater with your student and other family members or friends. Choose a text or script where the participants can read their parts and easily act it out.
- Allow your child to listen to books read electronically as another model of good pacing and use of expression.
- Use poetry as a way to teach your student how to chunk or group parts of sentences together when reading.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/3416>

# Comprehension

# Reading for Meaning with Your Child<sup>1</sup>



Reading with comprehension means understanding what's been read (Tompkins, 2006). It takes practice, time, and patience to develop reading comprehension skills. Families can play an important role in helping a child learn to read for understanding. Reading Rockets (2009) suggest the following steps when reading for meaning with your child.

First, make sure your child is reading **books appropriate for their reading level**. If a book is too hard, all your child's energy will be put into decoding and reading word for word, with less energy available to figure out what the book means. Books that your child can read with 98-100% accuracy are good choices for comprehension building.

Reading comprehension skills can be developed using a **before-during-after approach**. Below are a few suggestions that will help build comprehension skills.

## Before

Your goal is to help your child build an understanding of and purpose for what they're about to read. Look at the book's cover. Ask, "What do you think this book might be about? Why? Can you make some predictions?" Guide your child through the pages, discuss the pictures, and brainstorm what might happen in the story. Talk about any personal experiences your child may have that relate to the story.

## During

Your goal is to help your child be an active reader. Read together and talk about what's happening as they're reading. Stop and discuss any interesting or tricky vocabulary words. Talk about any surprising or sad passages, and help them visualize parts of the story. Ask your child, "Do you understand what's happening here? What do you think will happen next?" If your child seems unsure, stop, go back and reread if necessary. Discuss any confusing parts.

## After

Your goal is to help your child reflect on what they've read. Summarize and share your favorite part of the book. Have your child rate the book on a scale from 1 to 10 and say why. Have your child reread their favorite part or act it out.

Take the extra time before and during reading to read with your child this way. You'll soon find yourself reading with a child who is motivated to comprehend and learn from everything they read.

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/29918/>

Clipart from

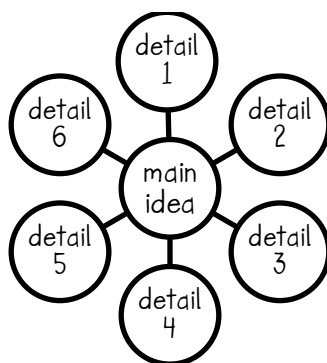
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# Graphic Organizers to Aid Comprehension<sup>1</sup>

Using graphic organizers before, during and after reading can teach students how to organize thoughts, reflect on reading and take notice of details within a story. The following graphic organizers as discussed in Tompkins (2006, pp. 274-275, 482-483) are helpful when building comprehension in young readers. If students are not yet strong writers, parents can explain the organizer to the student and ask them to respond verbally. Then the parent can write the student's response in the correct area. Once completed, the parent and student can discuss the organizer with their responses and reflect on why they completed it in the way that they did.

## Description

Descriptions within stories can include details about characters, topics, settings, or situations. In this chart the main idea would be written in the center and the details would be listed in the outside circles.



## Sequence

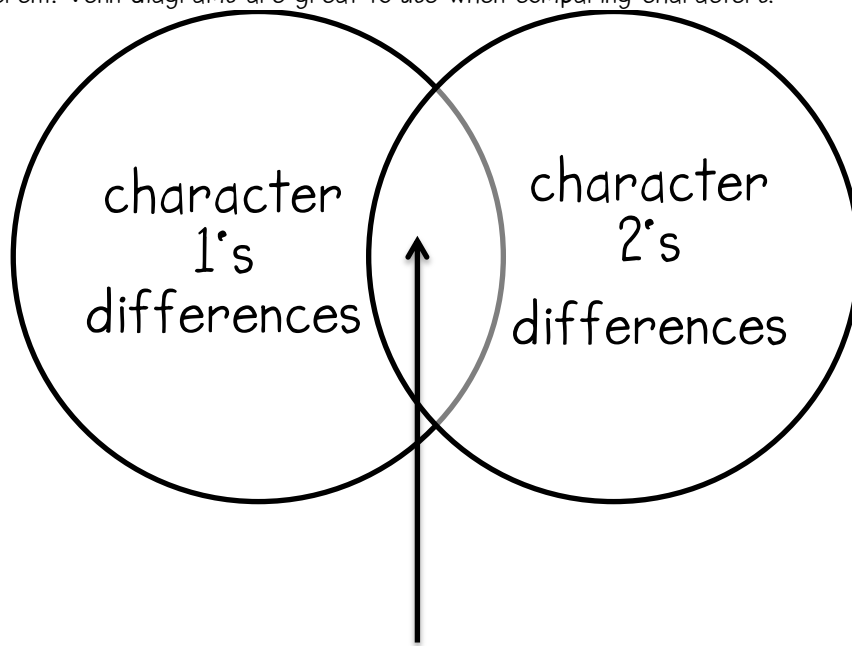
The sequence list can be used to organize the order of events within a story. This allows students to easily see when they happened in relationship to other events in the story.

Sequence of Events	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
	5.
	6.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Tompkins, G. E. (2006). *Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A balanced approach*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

## Comparison

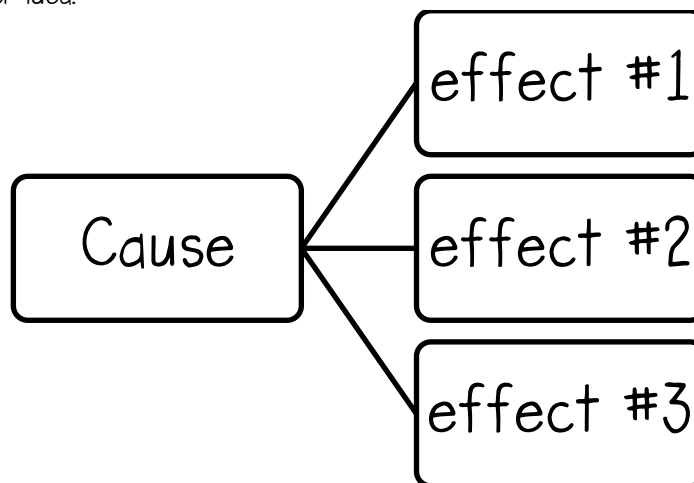
A Venn diagram can be used to compare how two or more story elements are alike and/or different. Venn diagrams are great to use when comparing characters!



Similarities between character 1 and character 2.

## Cause and Effect

This type of organizer is useful when reading a story that has one or more effects based on a causal event or idea.

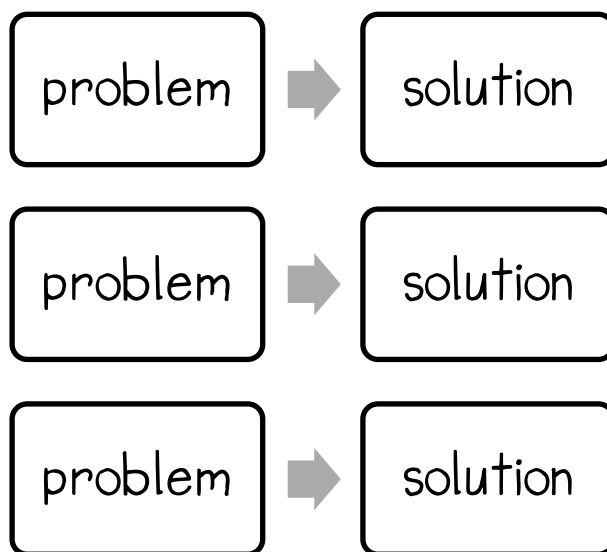


<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Tompkins, G. E. (2006). *Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A balanced approach*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.



## Problem and Solution

Use this simple organizer to identify problems within the story and how they were solved.



## Summarizing

Using this organizer allows students to quickly see what happened in each part of the book without having to go back in the story.

Beginning	Middle	End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students would list important details or happenings for each part of the story.</li> </ul>		

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Tompkins, G. E. (2006). *Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A balanced approach*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

## K-W-L Charts

A graphic organizer that serves as an excellent pre- and post-reading activity is the K-W-L chart. In this chart students will list what they already know in the "K" column, what they want to know in the "W" column and then what they learned in the "L" column.

K	W	L
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "K" column will activate prior knowledge and allow the student to recall prior experiences with the subject of study.</li> <li>• Here students will list what they already know about the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "W" column will get the student to think about what might possibly be in the book, and encourage interest in the text.</li> <li>• Here students will list what they already know about the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "L" column allows the student to reflect and summarize on what they read and knew knowledge they acquired through the text.</li> <li>• Here students will list what they learned about the subject.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Tompkins, G. E. (2006). *Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A balanced approach*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

# Dialogic Reading<sup>1</sup>

## What is Dialogic Reading?

Dialogic reading is a technique developed by Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst (N.D.) where adults are no longer solely the reader of the text, but rather the student takes on the role as the story teller. The adult's main purpose then is directed to being a listener and questioner of the student. Essentially it is learning that stems from a conversation between the student and adult. During the interaction it is the purpose of the adult to follow the PEER sequence:

Prompts the student to make a comment about the book they are reading,

Evaluates the response produced by the student,

Expands the student's response by rephrasing it and including additional information, and

Repeats the prompt to make certain the student has learned from the expansion during their interaction

## How should adults prompt students during reading?

When using the PEER sequence, adults should remember to use CROWD when prompting.

**Completion prompts:** When using completion prompts, the adult leaves a blank at the end of the sentence, which the students will fill in. For example, the adult might say, "I like to walk around the park. My dog runs and likes to \_\_\_\_." In this example the student would complete the sentence with the word "bark". This allows students the opportunity to see the structure of language.

**Recall prompts:** When using these prompts the adult asks questions about what has previously happened in the book. This helps students understand the plot of the story and how to recall sequence of events.

**Open-ended prompts:** Prompts in this area focus on the illustrations in the book and ask the students to give information about what is happening based on the pictures. These types of prompts help students improve their attention to details and expressive fluency.

**Wh- prompts:** The wh- prompts start the question with what, where, when, why and how, and help students to develop new vocabulary. These prompts also focus on the illustrations within the story as the source of reference for students when responding to the prompt.

**Distancing prompts:** These prompts ask students to relate the text and illustrations in the book to outside experiences. Through these prompts children can make connections between books and the world around them, and improve their verbal fluency, conversational abilities and narrative skills.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Whitehurst, G.J., (N.D.). *Dialogic reading: An effective way to read to preschoolers.*

# Additional Resources

# The ABCs of Developing Strong Reading Habits with Your Child

**A**sk questions when reading together.

**B**e a great model of reading to your child. Use funny voices, think aloud and use your own leisure time to show them your love for reading.

**C**elebrate birthdays or accomplishments by taking a trip to the book store and letting your student pick a new book.

**D**evote time each night to read with or to your child.

**E**ncourage your child to read for pleasure, not just for school.

**F**ind different types of text for them to read like magazines, comic books, or even e-books.

**G**ather old books and participate in a book exchange with other families. What you might have read a hundred times, someone else may discover for the first time.

**H**old high expectations for your student, but make sure your goals for them are attainable and realistic.

**I**nvoke your child's friends to have a play date at the library. Share your family's love of reading with others.

**J**oin other parents and share with each other what helps their children with reading and what you do to help your child. Collaboration is a wonderful thing!

**K**eept a copy of your child's favorite book in a special place. Just like a trophy, it deserves to be shown off!

**L**earn who your child is as a reader. What types of books do they like? What are their strengths and challenges as a reader?

**M**ake reading a reward not a punishment. If your child gets in trouble don't send them to their room with the TV off and tell them to read a book instead. Try using reading to reward your child. For example, if they had a great day at school, let them take a night off from doing their chores and read instead, or stay up an extra 15 minutes and read before going to bed.

**N**ote important ideas such as key words, predictions, and summaries that will help your student reflect on their learning as they get further into the story.

**O**ffer your child the opportunity to take a night off of reading. Don't force reading upon them, if they are too tired or not in the mood to curl up with a good book, that's ok!

**P**practice rereading the story using different voices. If a child has fun with reading they will more than likely enjoy it!

**Q**uiz your child throughout their reading. Using dialogic reading is a great way to encourage conversation and student thinking.

**R**ead, read, and read some more!

**S**upport your child by letting them know it's alright if they don't read perfectly and that you are there to help them with whatever they think they need help with most.

**T**ry out new books. Often times students stick to the same genre, when they expand what they read, their learning will expand as well!

**U**nderstand that your student is still young, they need time and practice to grow as a reader.

**V**olunteer in your child's class. This will allow you to see how reading is taught and practiced within the classroom.

**W**ait a few seconds before telling your child a word if they get stuck. Sometimes they just need extra time trying to decode it in their head.

**X**-ray a book with your child before reading it by making predictions about what they think the story will be about.

**Y**our time together is precious. Cherish things like your nightly story time and reading while they sit on your lap. It won't be long until they think they are too grown up for moments like those.

**Z**oom on over to the library and take advantage of the programs they offer like book clubs, summer reading programs, story times. Your child will grow in their reading development; make new friends and most of the time the programs are free!

## Questions to Ask Your Young Reader

As a parent, you might think you have a good idea about your child's interests and how they see themselves as a student; however when you ask them directly their answers might surprise you. By talking with your student and asking more direct questions about reading, you might gain some insight as to their thoughts about their own abilities and about reading in general. These questions<sup>1</sup> should serve as way for you to collect information which in turn you can use to build their confidence in reading and help them make more informed decision about the reading process. Feel free to add your own questions or modify the ones listed below, just remember this should not feel like you are drilling them for answers, so incorporate the questions into casual conversation and make sure they know how proud you are of them!

1. What is your favorite thing to read?
2. Who do you think is a good reader?
3. What makes them a good reader?
4. Where is your favorite place to read?
5. If you don't understand what you have read, what do you do?
6. When you pick a book at the library, what helps you to decide which book to choose?
7. Do you like to read out loud in class?
8. Do you think that your classmates think you are a good reader?
9. Do you think you read faster than other kids?
10. Does reading make you feel happy?
11. Do you think you can read better now than you could before?
12. Do you think reading is relaxing?
13. Do you think you are a good reader?
14. Do you think people in your family think you are a good reader?
15. How can I help you with your reading at home?

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Henk, W. A., & Melnick, S. A. (1995). The reader self-perception scale (rsps): A new tool for measuring how children feel about themselves as readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 48 (6), 470-482.

# How Can Parents Positively Impact Their Student's Learning at Home?

Parents can foster good reading practices at home. It's as easy as remembering  
"READER"

Robust

Education

Among

Daily

Engaging

Relationships



Parents can do this by reading, writing, and speaking with their students through natural experiences. Ways to do this include:

- ★ Writing letters to family members
- ★ Creating shopping lists
- ★ Reading menus, signs, product packaging
- ★ Telling stories, jokes, singing songs and playing rhyming games
- ★ Following written directions of a recipe or craft activity
- ★ Playing board games
- ★ Visiting community libraries and museums
- ★ Developing a daily reading routine
- ★ Modeling good reading habits and creating a home environment that encourages and supports learning and literacy.



# Family Reading Ideas

Reading together with your student can make a huge impact on their learning! Here are some great ideas on how to incorporate reading and learning at home, as supported by Lelko (2012).

## Family Book Club

Form a book club with parents of children the same age as your student by focusing on the same book and establishing a day and time to meet together with the other parents and children to:

- discuss the book (summarize, point out special vocabulary, find conflicts and resolutions, identify important characters and their unique traits)
- perform skits
- create projects that help explain the story or represent the story through objects/symbols that are meaningful to the book (and have each family explain their project to the rest of the group)
- brainstorm and/or write alternate endings
- make connections between the book and real-life events through field trips or videos

## Book of the Week

Select a book to focus on for an entire week and dedicate a small block of time each day to read and/or participate in fun activities together. Begin the week by looking through the pictures and asking them to make predictions about the story. Then read it aloud, stopping to discuss and summarize throughout the story. Once you have modeled proper pacing and expression while reading to your student you can do a variety of things to continue their learning:

- have them read the story aloud to you
- ask them to draw a picture that shows their favorite part
- go on a family field trip to a location that might provide more information or is closely related to the story that you read
- act the story out together using costumes and props of items that are found around your home
- create your own book that was inspired by or might be a sequel to the book you read
- Incorporate writing by having your student write to the author or an expert in the area of study that you read about asking questions or requesting more information.

## Reading Night

Schedule a night during the week where the television, computer and electronic games stay off. Take this time to read together, visit the local library for story time or to check out books, or even take some time to read independently. Showing your student the importance of reading at home and displaying your own enjoyment of reading will help create interest in your students.



# Creating a Home Library<sup>1</sup>

Starting a home library for your child shows them how important books are. Having books of their own in a special place boosts the chance that your child will want to read even more. Here are some ideas for creating your own home library.

## Finding books

- Become a treasure hunter! Browse book store sales, garage sales, flea markets, used book stores, and sales at your local library
- Organize a children's book swap with friends, community groups, or your school
- Encourage family and friends to give books as gifts for birthdays, holidays, and other celebrations
- Don't forget quality nonfiction and children's magazines!

## Building your library

- A cardboard box or small wooden packing crate that you can decorate together might make a good bookcase. Or you might clear one of the family bookshelves.
- Pick a special place for your child's books so that they will know where to look for them – in a cozy corner of your child's bedroom or close to where the rest of the family gathers and reads if your child is very social.
- Help your child to arrange their books in some order – their favorite books, books about animals, or holiday books. Use whatever method will help them most easily find the book they're looking for.
- *"This book belongs to..."* Bookplates give your child a sense of ownership and can add "newness" to a used book. You can make your own or download and print one of these colorful designs by children's book illustrators: <http://www.myhomelibrary.org/bookplates.html>
- If you and your child make your own books together, you can add those to your home library.
- Borrow books from your local library. Go to the children's section and spend time with your child reading and selecting books to take home and put in their special spot. You might even have a box or space just for library books, so that they don't get mixed up with your child's own books.

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/26730>

# How to Read an E-Book with Your Child<sup>1</sup>



Electronic books, called e-books, are becoming more and more commonplace these days. Some readers, like the first-generation Kindle and Nook devices, offer a basic digital version of a print book. Children scroll through the pages to read, and the experience is somewhat similar to reading a traditional book.

Newer, full-color, touchscreen devices such as iPads and the Nook Color have expanded what is possible to include e-books with many more features. These "enhanced" e-books offer a different reading experience. Often bought as apps through iTunes, these e-books provide lots of choice. A user can choose have the whole book read to them, or can choose to read the book themselves. E-book enhancements consist of a range of things, but often include listening to music that complements the story, playing story-related games, completing coloring pages, and more. Most children find interactive e books fun and engaging. But do they help develop important early literacy skills such as letter names and letter sounds or more complex skills such as comprehension?

The e-book market is too young to have enough solid research on the topic to know for sure yet, but researchers have spent lots of time watching families with young children engage with e-books. These observations suggest that it's easy for kids to get carried away with the digital nature of the e-book. Parents can help keep the focus on reading and the story by following three simple suggestions:

1. Recognize the novelty factor. The first few times your child is interacting with a new e-book, allow time for exploration of the features. Once your child has spent some time exploring, set out to read or listen to the story without too many non-story related interruptions.
2. Enjoy the features, but don't forget to focus on the story. See if you can help your child find a balance between having fun with the games and sticker books and really enjoying and understanding the story. As with all books, engage your reader in conversations about the story. "What do you think will happen next? What is your favorite part of the story?"
3. Stay present with your child and the book experience. It's tempting to let the device do the work – read the story, play a game and interact with your child. But there's no substitute for quality parent-child conversation. Keep talking, commenting on interesting words and ideas, and sharing your love of literacy with your child.

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.readingrockets.org/newsletters/pdfs/edextras/56082-en.pdf>  
 Clipart from [http://cdn1.pcadvisor.co.uk/cmsdata/products/3405764/Kindle\\_5\\_2012.jpg](http://cdn1.pcadvisor.co.uk/cmsdata/products/3405764/Kindle_5_2012.jpg),  
<http://admintell.napco.com/ee/images/uploads/appletell/ibooks1.1-ribbonbookmark.png>, and  
<http://www.educationworld.com/sites/default/files/nook1.jpg>

# Ways to Get Reluctant Readers to Read<sup>1</sup>

## Read Funny Favorites

Share comics, articles, jokes, and stories that make you laugh with your child. Read them aloud during breakfast or make it an after-school ritual. Ask him to tell you his funny anecdotes.

## Based on the Book . . . or the Movie

It is great to give your child the book of a movie she liked, but also encourage reading by giving her books based on TV shows and movies that she already watches.

## Books-a-Plenty

Make sure that there are books available to your child in every room of the house and everywhere he goes, from having magazines in the car to bringing a comic book for him to read while waiting on line.

## Read in Public

Let your child see that you like to read for fun. It's important to show that you enjoy reading and make time for it if you expect her to believe that reading is a fun fundamental.

## Talk about TV and Movies

Encourage your child to tell you about the shows he watched. Have him retell the plot and describe the characters to build his sense of narrative, story, and general comprehension skills.

## Interactive Is Interesting

Use the Internet with your child to explore a subject she enjoys. Try to find sites that include fun graphics or games and aren't too text-heavy.

## Get a Subscription

Kids enjoy getting mail, and a subscription to kids' magazine will give him something to look forward to every month that is *his*. The idea that the magazine is just for him makes it more appealing to read.

## Go to Story-Hours, Readings, and Plays

Show her that a lot of kids and adults enjoy books by going to readings and story-hours at your local library or bookstore. Plays are especially great, since they are a form of literature designed not to be read, but to be seen.

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/more-reading-resources/integrating-reading-everyday-life-reluctant-readers>

# Risk Indicators

The following list includes some examples of indicators that might raise awareness in you regarding your student's reading ability level. It is important to remember this list includes just a few of the warning signs. If you suspect that your student is working below their developmental level it is always best to talk with your student's teacher or a reading specialist to ensure the proper assessments are conducted.

## Preschool

- Difficulties with oral language. For example, poor vocabulary or listening comprehension as compared to the child's peers.
- A disability, such as a hearing impairment, that may affect their oral language acquisition.
- Having limited exposure to oral and written language up to the present.

## Kindergarten and First Grade

- In addition to the indicators mentioned above, the following should also be considered:
- Lack of understanding basic concepts of print such as, print convey meaning, print is read left to right, and words are separated by spaces.
- Poor understanding letter-sounds relationships.
- Poor phonological/ phonemic awareness (inability to produce words that rhyme, identify beginning and ending sounds of words, and blend and segment one-syllable words.)

## Second and Third Grade

- In addition to the indicators mentioned above, the following should also be considered:
- Slow, labored reading of grade level text.
- Poor reading comprehension.
- Poor spelling.
- A history of difficulty with decoding unfamiliar words.

# Community Resources

Within many communities there are a wide variety of resources available for the use and participation of the members that live within the area. Many parents do not take advance of these resources, and do not realize how beneficial they might be for their family. Below is an example of a calendar and resources from OC Public Libraries (2013) for the Katie Wheeler Library in Irvine<sup>1</sup> listing all of the events held for their children's program.

The screenshot displays the website for the Irvine Katie Wheeler Library. On the left sidebar, there are links for 'Irvine Katie Wheeler Home', 'Hours', 'Directions', and 'Calendar'. Below these are 'POPULAR' links for 'Contact Us', 'eBooks', 'Literary Orange', and 'Children's Services'. Further down are buttons for 'SEARCH THE CATALOG', 'GO TO MY ACCOUNT', 'LIBRARIES', 'EVENTS', 'BOOK TALK', and 'ONLINE DATABASES'. The main content area features a 'Calendar' for March 2013, with tabs for 'DAY', 'WEEK', 'MONTH', and 'YEAR'. The calendar shows events for each day of the month, including 'Homework Help', 'School Age Activity/Program', 'Family Storytime', and 'Teen Advisory Group/Meeting'. The events are listed in a grid format with dates and times.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler 6:30 PM - Family Storytime - Irvine Katie Wheeler	6 4:00 PM - School Age Activity/Program - Irvine Katie Wheeler	7 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler	8	9 11:00 AM - Family Storytime - Irvine Katie Wheeler
10 1:00 PM - School Age Activity/Program - Irvine Katie Wheeler	11 5:00 PM - Teen Advisory Group/Meeting - Irvine Katie Wheeler	12 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler 6:30 PM - Family Storytime - Irvine Katie Wheeler	13 4:00 PM - School Age Activity/Program - Irvine Katie Wheeler	14 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler	15	16 11:00 AM - Family Storytime - Irvine Katie Wheeler
17	18 4:00 PM - School Age Book Club/ Discussion - Irvine Katie Wheeler	19 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler 6:30 PM - Family Storytime - Irvine Katie Wheeler	20 4:00 PM - School Age Activity/Program - Irvine Katie Wheeler	21 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler	22	23 11:00 AM - Family Storytime - Irvine Katie Wheeler 1:00 PM - Family Activity/Program - Irvine Katie Wheeler
24	25 4:30 PM - School Age Activity/Program - Irvine Katie Wheeler	26 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler	27 4:00 PM - School Age Activity/Program - Irvine Katie Wheeler	28 3:30 PM - Homework Help - Irvine Katie Wheeler 7:00 PM - Book Club / Discussion - Irvine Katie Wheeler	29	30
31						

Within in this library's website they also have a kids section where parents can gain more information on ways to help their students learn at home, grade level book lists, e-books and audio books available on line, a book talk blog, and BookFlix, where students can view video story books. Below are screen shots of the different areas of the children's section of the website.

<sup>1</sup>From <http://ocpl.org/kids>

## GROWN UPS

- » Kids Home
- » Read →
- » Play →
- » Learn →
- » Grown Ups →

## Early Education and Development

[Tweet](#) 0
 [+1](#) 0
 [Like](#) 0

[Help Me Grow Orange County](#)  
 Help Me Grow connects children and their families to developmental services to enhance the development, behavior and learning of children birth through five years.

[Zero to Three](#)  
 ZERO TO THREE is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers.

[Scholastic Parents](#)  
 The publisher offers parent resources in finding books, information on child development, and crafts and other activities.

[Los Angeles Times' Parent Reading Guide](#)  
 The LA Times' Reading by 9 Initiative offers tips to encourage and improve early literacy and reading recommendations in English and Spanish.

## POPULAR

[Contact Us](#)
[eBooks](#)

[Literary Orange](#)
[Children's Services](#)

**SEARCH THE CATALOG**

**GO TO MY ACCOUNT**

OC Public Libraries

[OC.gov.com](#)
[quick access](#)

[Catalog](#)
[Current Agency](#)
[Entire County](#)

[Find Books and More..](#)

[BOOKS, MOVIES & MUSIC](#)
[eLIBRARY](#)
[KIDS](#)
[TEENS](#)
[LIBRARIES](#)
[SERVICES](#)
[CONTACT THE LIBRARY](#)

[OC Public Libraries](#)
[Read](#)
[Book Lists](#)

[Email](#)
[Print](#)

## READ

- » Kids Home
- » Read →
- » Play →
- » Learn →
- » Grown Ups →

## Book Lists

[Tweet](#) 0
 [+1](#) 0
 [Like](#) 0

Age appropriate books recommended by OC Public Libraries' librarians.

- [1st and 2nd Grades Reading List](#) (21 KB)
- [2nd and 3rd Grades Reading List](#) (22.2 KB)
- [3rd and 4th Grades Reading List](#) (22.9 KB)
- [4th and 5th Grades Reading List](#) (22.5 KB)
- [5th and 6th Grade Reading List](#) (23.2 KB)
- [6th and 7th Grades Reading List](#) (23.3 KB)

## POPULAR

[Contact Us](#)
[eBooks](#)

[Literary Orange](#)
[Children's Services](#)

<sup>1</sup>From <http://ocpl.org/kids>

The screenshot shows the OC Public Libraries website. The header includes the OC Public Libraries logo, the website URL [ocgov.com](http://ocgov.com), and navigation links for Catalog, Current Agency, and Entire County. A search bar is present with the text "Find Books and More...". The main navigation bar lists categories: BOOKS, MOVIES & MUSIC, eLIBRARY, KIDS, TEENS, LIBRARIES, SERVICES, and CONTACT THE LIBRARY. The breadcrumb trail shows: OC Public Libraries > Read > eBooks & eAudio Books. The page content includes a "READ" sidebar with links to Kids Home, Read, Play, Learn, and Grown Ups. The main content area has a message: "Sorry, this page has moved! Please click [here](#) to go to the new location." Below this is the "eBooks & eAudio Books" section, which includes social media sharing buttons (Tweet, +1, Like) and two sub-sections: "eBooks for Kids" and "eAudiobooks for Kids". The "eBooks for Kids" section includes a link to "Check out eBooks with your library card number and PIN (password)." and a note that eBooks are compatible with various devices. The "eAudiobooks for Kids" section includes a link to "Check out eAudiobooks with your library card and PIN (password)." and a note that eAudio books are compatible with various devices.

The screenshot shows the OC Public Libraries' Book Talk blog post. The header features a large "Book Talk" title in a speech bubble, with the subtitle "OC PUBLIC LIBRARIES' BLOG ABOUT BOOKS!". Below the header is a navigation bar with links: Home, Adults, Children, Younger Teens, Older Teens, Lib. Book Clubs, and About. A filter box shows "Showing posts with label **Children**. Show all posts". The main content area features a post titled "Adventure List for Intermediate & Upper Readers". The post includes a link to "Run Boy Run" by XFICU Orlev, Uri, and a description: "This tale is based on the true story of a nine-year-old boy who escapes the Warsaw Ghetto and must survive throughout the war in". To the right of the post is the County of Orange California logo. At the bottom right, there is a quote: "Be awesome! Be a book nut!" -Dr. Seuss.

<sup>1</sup>From <http://ocpl.org/kids>





In addition to the online resources, librarians can help your children find books within their interest levels, students can participate in story time and reading incentive programs and parents can learn about other programs that might be of great advantage to the students or the family as a whole. Check out your local library and start taking advantage of the wonderful resources available to you and your student!

<sup>1</sup>From <http://ocpl.org/kids>

## Literacy Websites

The internet can be a great resource for both parents and even young learners. Here is a list of websites for more information on reading and literacy!

- <http://www.readingrockets.org/audience/parents>
- <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/>
- <http://www.starfall.com/>
- <http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/>
- <http://pbskids.org/wordgirl/>
- <http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>
- <http://www.getreadytoread.org/>
- <http://www.earlylit.net/>
- <http://www.wlearning.com>
- <http://en.childrenslibrary.org>

## Literacy Apps for Mobile Devices

Today's young learners are more tech savvy than ever. Below is a list of mobile apps that encourage skill development in reading and literacy! These can be found by searching the app name in the iTunes app store.

App Name	App Icon
Don't Let the Pigeon Run This App	
Bob Books	
Spelling City	
abc Pocket Phonics	
Word Magic	
iWriteWords	

Clipart from: <http://a1.mzstatic.com/us/r1000/088/Purple/c0/f9/60/mzm.wwuecuh.png>,  
[http://www.scholastic.com/parents/bob\\_books/images/prodImage-SevenSets.jpg](http://www.scholastic.com/parents/bob_books/images/prodImage-SevenSets.jpg),  
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/sites/default/files/posts/u133/images/spelling-city-146x150.png>,  
<http://www.pragmaticmom.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/mziofccgcoul.png>,  
<http://staff.bbhcsd.org/kolism/files/2011/01/WordMagic.jpg>

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