

My Favorite Stray Cat: Reading Fluency 3

As children begin to read on their own, they need lots of practice to get better. They need to be able to read words **accurately**, with **expression**, and at a **good speed**. Sometimes parents think children should understand and remember everything in the story the first time they read it. But children often need to talk about a story or to read it several times to really **understand** it.

To increase fluency, follow these three steps. First, before reading the story, ask questions to help your child focus on it. Second, read the story to your child and then help your child read the story to you. Third, after you read the story, ask your child questions about it.

Here are some ways to help your child improve her reading fluency.



Before Reading *My Favorite Stray Cat*

Before reading a story, have children think about how it may connect to their own lives. One way to help children make connections is to ask questions. With the story, *My Favorite Stray Cat*, ask, Do you know anyone who has a cat? What is a stray cat? Are there stray cats in your neighborhood? Then have her read the story to see if there are things in it that she didn't know before.

Read *My Favorite Stray Cat*

Sit down with your child to read *My Favorite Stray Cat*. Sit next to your child so that both of you can see the story. Read the story out loud to him. Try to read with expression. For example, use a worried voice when you read, "Rosie was scared. It's dangerous being a stray cat. What if something happened to Frankie?" Point to the words as you read them. Read slowly enough that your child doesn't get lost or confused. This helps him become familiar with the story and learn new words and how to pronounce them so that he can read **smoothly**. Then, if your child feels confident, have him read *My Favorite Stray Cat* out loud to you. You follow along quietly to notice how well he is doing and if he is having difficulty with any particular words. This method works best with a story that your child is familiar with. If he struggles, read the story together or take turns reading each sentence—you read a sentence, then your child reads the next sentence.



After Reading *My Favorite Stray Cat*

A good way to get your child to remember more about what she has read is to ask her questions that will get her to think more about the story. You can make up your own questions or ask some of the following. Questions like these help her think more about the meaning of the story.

- Why wasn't Rosie supposed to feed stray cats?
- Do you think that Rosie was right to give Frankie part of her hot dog?
- How would you feel if you were Rosie?
- How would you feel if you were Frankie?
- What would you do if you saw a stray cat?
- What part of the story did you like the best? Why?

Have Fun

If you or your child gets tired, stop and come back to the story and activities on another day. The more your child enjoys reading and doing the activities, the more fluent in reading she will become.

Note: You can use these same activities with another story or book. You can follow the same order of activities, or you can change the order or choose the activities that you think will be most helpful and the most fun for your child.



More Information

My Favorite Stray Cat is the most advanced of the three tip sheets for improving children's fluency. If your child has difficulty with the activities in this tip sheet, we suggest that you ask for the first tip sheet on fluency, *The Two Best Cakes: Reading Fluency 1*, or the second tip sheet, *How Many Elephants Would Fit in a School Bus?: Reading Fluency 2*. After trying the activities in those tip sheets, come back and try this tip sheet.

If you and your child enjoy these activities, tell your child's teacher. The teacher may have more ideas to share for learning fun at home. If your child is having a hard time with these activities, you also can talk to your child's teacher. There may be other activities to help.

Watch Families Doing Activities

To watch families doing these activities, please go to: www.schoolsuccesslibrary.com and click on the "Parents" link at the top of the page. Next, click on "Literacy Resources". Then, click on the button that matches your child's age group. Scroll down the page and click on the video that goes with this tip sheet. Other tip sheets and videos are there as well.



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