

Concepts About Print

How to Help Your Child Learn About Books

As children begin to read, they need to know how books work. They need to learn how to hold a book so it is right side up, where a book begins, and how to turn the pages. They also must understand that the words on a page have meaning and that in English we start at the top of the page and read the words from left to right and from top to bottom. As children get more experienced, they learn what a period or a question mark at the end of a sentence means. Teachers call these skills Concepts About Print.

Without understanding how words, sentences, and books work, children can have trouble learning to read and write. You can help your child learn about books.

Games to Play with Children to Help Them Understand How Books Work

There are many fun games you can play with your children to help them learn how books work. Here are just a few ideas:



Reading Books Together

The best way to help your child learn how books work is to read to him every day. Sit down next to your child or hold him on your lap. When you read, every so often—

- Ask your child where the front of the book is.
- Turn to the first page and ask your child where you should start reading. If he doesn't know, point to the first word at the top of the page.
- Point to the words as you read, showing him that you are reading across the page from left to right.
- When you get to the end of the line, ask where you should start reading next.
- Show him that you go down to the next line and point out the words as you read from left to right. Help him learn that you are going from the top line to the bottom line.
- Have fun reading with your child.

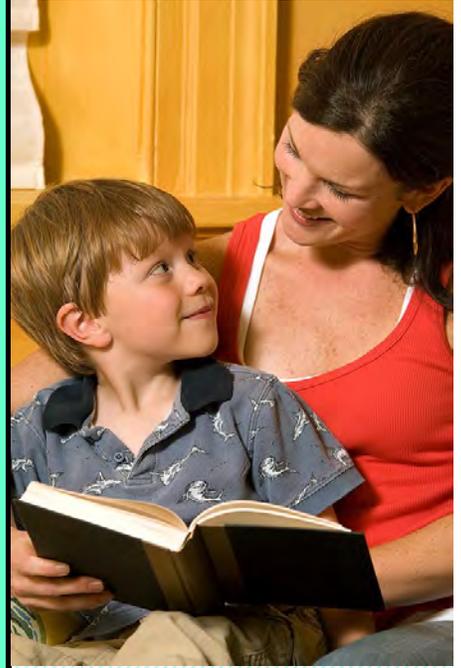
Read it again!

Children love to have you read the same book over and over. When you read a book a second time, see if your child can point out the front of the book and the back of the book, where to start reading, and how to read across the page from left to right. Ask her to point to one word. Ask her to point to two letters and then two words. This sounds easy, but young children are just learning about letters and words. You might have to show letters and words to your child several times while she is learning.

Whose House Is This?

If your child has learned how to point to one or two letters and can point to one or two words, he may be ready to learn about sentences. Read the *Whose House Is This* book with your child. When you get to the end of a sentence, point to the period and tell your child what it is. Say something like, "This is a period. It tells us that we have come to the end of the sentence. It's like a little ball. Can you point to another period?" Point to a question mark and tell your child what it is. See if he can find another question mark in the book.

You also can show your child the quotation marks that show where Sally is talking. They are at the beginning of the sentence where Sally starts talking and at the end when she stops (" "). There is an exclamation point in the story too (!) It shows where Sally gets excited when she realizes that she has found a mouse house.



Write My Story

Ask your child to draw a picture of something that interests her. Then, ask her to tell you about the picture. Below the picture, write down what she says. Read it back to her, pointing to the words as you read them. Do this again with other pictures. You can collect these pictures and staple them together to make a book. Then you and your child can read her book together, starting on the left side of the page and pointing to the words as you read. When your child gets older, she can write down the words herself.

Letter and Word Detective

Have your child cut up the sheet of letters and simple words. Have him put them in a sack or bowl and then mix them up. Show your child the words of the popular song, *Wheels on the Bus*. Have your child reach in the sack and pull out an item, such as the letter "d" or the word "bus." Have him find the letter or word in the story. Try it again with other songs we have included in the packet.



What's the Story?

Part of reading books is learning that stories have a *beginning, middle and end*. Have your child cut apart the pictures. Read the short stories we have included to your child. After each sentence, have her find the picture that matches the sentence. For example, you read: "The cat sees a vase of flowers on the table." Your child then finds the picture of the cat looking at the flowers on the table.

Have her find the pictures that match the other two sentences. After reading the story, ask her what happened at the beginning of the story, in the middle and at the end.

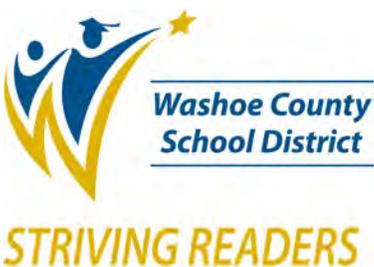


Watch Families Doing Activities

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.

More Ideas

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.



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