



Sharing the Power of Learning

Summer Reads Parent/Guardian Handbook

This handbook is to help your child with reading. Volunteers from the Minnesota Literacy Council's Summer Reads program designed this handbook to give suggestions for some common parent/guardian concerns. This handbook also includes a list of reading activities that can be done at home.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I help my child choose a book?

The first step in helping a child read is to choose a book at the right level. If the book is too hard, your child may become frustrated. If it is too easy, your child may not be interested or challenged. Your child's teacher should know the right reading level for your child.

One way to find a book at the right level for your child is the Five Finger Rule. Open to the middle of a book and have your child read aloud. Each time she comes across a word she does not know, hold up a finger. If you have five fingers up before she finishes reading the page, the book is too hard. If your child makes no mistakes, the book may be too easy. If your child makes two or three mistakes, the book is right for his/her reading level. Sometimes it is helpful for your child to read a book that she can read easily (making no mistakes) in order to build confidence.

If you can't find a book at your local library, you can request to have it sent to your library. You can also place the request with a librarian's help or on the library's website.

What are F&P levels?

Twin Cities public schools rank reading levels according to the Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) system. Reading levels are designated letters rising in difficulty from A-Z, in which A represents a beginning reading level and Z an advanced reading level. Knowing your child's level can help you discuss her progress in reading with the classroom teacher.

Books organized by F&P levels can be found at the following under "Guided Reading" which can be accessed by the reading level toolbar: <http://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/>

How do I get my child to read regularly?

You can create a reading goal for your child and make a weekly chart to track her progress. If your child is older, talk with her to decide what a good reading goal would be. The metro area libraries have a free summer program called Book-a-Wocky that gives prizes for reading books. For more information, visit <http://www.hclib.org/kids/summer/FAQ2012.cfm>.

What reading resources are available for non-English speakers?

Libraries are great resources for books in languages other than English. Some libraries have collections of non-English books. Check with your local librarian for sections of non-English books and other bilingual materials. You can also check with your local librarian to see if these programs are available at your library or at another one nearby.

The following Minneapolis libraries have books available in languages other than English:

Spanish (Español)

Augsburg Park
Brookdale
Brooklyn Park
East Lake
Eden Prairie
Edina (children's materials only)
Franklin
Golden Valley
Hopkins
Hosmer
Maple Grove
Minneapolis Central
Minnetonka (children's materials only)
Nokomis
North Regional
Northeast
Oxboro
Penn
Lake
Pierre Bottineau
Ridgedale
Rockford Road
Rogers
Roosevelt
Southdale
St. Louis Park
Sumner
Walker

Washburn

Webber Park

Westonka

Somali (Soomaali)

Augsburg Park
Brookdale
East Lake
Eden Prairie
Franklin
Hopkins
Hosmer
Minneapolis Central
Northeast
Oxboro
Roosevelt
Southdale
Sumner
Walker

Hmong (Hmoob)

Brookdale
Brooklyn Park
Champlin
Minneapolis Central
North Regional
Sumner
Webber Park

What if my child does not want to read?

There may be many reasons why your child does not want to read. The best way to learn why is to ask her. She may be frustrated because the book is too hard. Try having your child read easier books. It is important that she understands what she is reading before moving on to harder books.

Your child might not be interested in the topic. You can ask your librarian for books at the right level that match her interests. If a book your child likes is too difficult to read alone, you can use one of the tips in the “How do I read a more difficult book with my child?” section.

What if my child reads too softly, slowly, quickly, etc.?

Reading too softly, slowly, or quickly is not necessarily a problem, as long as your child understands what she reads. Try reading the same book multiple times with your child to check for understanding and natural pacing, or check out audio books from your library.

If your child ignores punctuation because she is reading too quickly, take turns reading every other sentence. If your child skips words, ask her about the word that was skipped (how it should sound, what it means). If this happens often consider reading a book at a lower level. It is important to note that too much criticism of a child can cause frustration. Try and encourage your child as much as possible!

What can I do to challenge my child?

If your child is not being challenged, choose a harder level book or encourage your child to read on her own. In addition, select different kinds of books. When reading with your child, you can also ask her questions to encourage critical thinking about what she is reading.

For example in fiction you can ask: Who are the main characters? What happened in the story (beginning, middle, end)? In nonfiction books, you can ask your child about the topic and connections to his/her own life. For example: What did you learn about the topic (magnets, animals, history, etc)? What did or didn't you like about the book? Why?

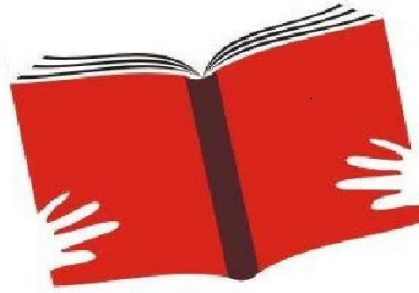
Another way to challenge your child is to use writing activities. For instance after reading a book, your child can write alternative endings.



How do I read a more difficult book with my child?

Try alternating who reads each paragraph or page, reading in unison while pointing at each word, or reading a sentence and have your child repeat it back to you. With difficult books it's important to stop and check to make sure your child understands what she reads. This can be done by asking your child simple comprehension questions or to summarize what she has read.

Reading Activities!



Note: The ages given are only a guideline, and your child may be at a different level than the one suggested for her age here.

Early Reader (ages 4-6)

- Can connect letters with sounds, but may confuse upper-case with lower-case
- May recognize some words
- May write some letters or words, or pretend to write them
- Uses short, simple descriptions of pictures and stories
- Is learning how to tell and follow stories
- Understands the format of books

Matching Game: Choose a word, then read a book with that has that word. After reading, ask your child to go back and find all the pages where the word appears.

Memory Game: Write capital letters on index cards (or pieces of paper) and then write the corresponding lower case letter on a different set of index cards. Turn the cards over and arrange them into rows. Each player then turns over two cards. If the upper case and lower case letters match, they are kept face up. You can also use this game to learn simple words. You can also play this with simple words and pictures that correspond to the words.

Jump Rope Game: Lay a jump rope on the ground in the shape of a letter, such as “S.” Have the child jump his/her way around the jump rope while saying the letter sound, in this case “Sss”. Work your way through the alphabet so the child can become familiar with all letter sounds.

Everyday Rhyming: Point out rhyming words in everyday conversations. For example, “I *think* that dish is in the *sink*. Do you hear how those words sound the same? *Think...sink...they both have the sound ink.*” Or, ask your child to think of rhyming words: “Maria, will you feed the cat? What is a word that rhymes with cat?” This will improve your child’s vocabulary and introduce her to patterns in the English language.

Letter Connection: Introduce letters and letter sounds to your child by connecting everyday objects to your child’s first name. If your child’s name began with the letter “J” you can point out things that also start with the “J” sound. “Jonathan, look at this bottle of juice! Jonathan and juice both start with J!”

Developing Reader (ages 5-7)

- Knows most or all letters
- Recognizes some short words and can pronounce them correctly
- Can write some words
- May use pictures to help understand plot
- May recognize and pay attention to punctuation

Everyday Writing: Are you writing a grocery or shopping list? Have your child help by writing or reading the listed items for you. This simple activity can help expand your child's vocabulary, as well as provide reading and writing practice.

Category ABC: Choose a category, such as food or animals, and brainstorm items in that category that start with each letter of the alphabet. Or, you can choose a letter and brainstorm items from several categories that start with that letter, such as animals, foods, or places.

Snowman: A game similar to "hangman," but more appropriate for Minnesota winters! Pick a word and then write spaces for how many letters are in the word. Have your child pick one letter at a time, trying to guess the letters in the word. If she chooses a letter that is not in the word, draw a piece of a snowman on the paper. If your child guesses all the letters correctly before you draw the whole snowman, she wins! Begin with three and four letter words for younger children.

Role Play: When reading a book with your child, ask her to act out different characters or what they think will happen next. If your child asks you to act out a character, play along!

Intermediate Reader (ages 6-9)

- Can read short sentences
- Can read some books by his/herself
- Can write short sentences
- May be able to make predictions about the story or make connections within the story, to other stories, or to her own life

5Ws Detective Game: Is there a cookie mysteriously missing from the kitchen? Give your child a 'detective notebook' and ask her to write down the 5Ws - who, what, when, where, and why--about this serious crime. This will help your child become familiar with common "wh-" question words.



Adverb of the Day: To expand your child's vocabulary, pick an adverb of the day and have your child act out the adverb while doing everyday things. For example, have your child brush his/her teeth "dramatically" or climb the stairs "sleepily".

Everyday Endings: Throughout the day, ask your child questions involving different verb endings, such as "-ing" and "-ed." For example, ask your child "Have you *brushed* your teeth or are you *brushing* your teeth?" This activity can help your child use different tenses (describing past, present, future events).

Book Making: Here's a fun activity for a rainy day! Fold paper in half and your child can fill in the new book pages with pictures and sentences to create her own story.

Word Scavenger Hunts: Write out words and hide them in your home. Have your child look for the words and bring them back to you. You can tell your child, "Find the word 'has'" or "Find the word that starts with the letter 'h'."

Independent Reader (ages 8-11)

- Can read books by herself
- Can read books that are mostly text
- Can write more complex sentences
- Can understand, summarize, and make inferences about what she reads

Postcard to the Author: Have your child write a letter or postcard to the author after she has finished the book. The letter can include what she liked about the book, connections she made to real life from the book, or suggestions for the author on alternate endings. You can also have your child write a letter to a character from the book.

Map the Story: For the child who likes to draw, have her draw her favorite place in the book or favorite thing that happened in the book. More advanced readers can draw a map of the book's setting.

Story-on-the-go: Your child can practice her oral literacy by making up stories. This can happen at any time--on the bus, while waiting in line, at the park, etc. Ask your child to tell you a story about something she sees or make up the beginning of a story and ask her to tell you what happens next. You can also take turns making up part of the story.

Charades: Write down words on slips of paper--they can be actions (swimming, eating a popsicle, etc.), people, places, or anything else that you can act out. One person picks a word and acts it out without talking while the audience has to guess which word she is acting out. If a child is shy or doesn't want to act, you can have her draw a picture of the word she was given. For more advanced readers, have them write down and act out titles of books.