

Reading Adventure

Dear Parents,

I wanted to take some time to inform you of our new adventure! Today your child has brought home a plastic bag with a book inside of it. I am asking that you make some time to allow your child to read this book to you. The book should be familiar to your child, as we have read it in class.

The purpose for sending home a book, is to provide your child with some additional time to practice reading aloud. It will also allow you to become more familiar with the reading activities your child is engaged in at school. Although your child is capable of reading this book to self, please make some time to sit and listen to them read.

Most books I send home will be on your child's instructional reading level, which means they should be capable of reading the words, but may need a little assistance. Sometimes however, I may send home a book that may be "leveled up", or a little more challenging for your child. The intent would be to provide practice decoding (blending) new words. It is not meant to frustrate the reader. If this is happening, please let me know immediately.

Each day your child is involved in many different reading experiences. Students are read to several times each day. During this time, students practice listening comprehension skills. Strategies and skills are modeled to help the students begin to learn how to understand stories better and become a "good reader". Students meet with me in a small group, to practice applying the skills taught and to reinforce phonic skills, using a leveled text. They are also given time to practice reading leveled books to self or a partner. Additionally, the children enjoy their "free reading" time, where they may choose any book of interest from our class library to read to self or with a partner.

Reading, like any other new skill, takes a lot of practice. The more time a child has to practice this skill the better they will become. My hope is that having your child share his/her book with you will add to their learning. What I do not want this to become is a chore or burden. My hope is that we can keep this experience fun for both your child, and yourself.

We have already had a discussion in class about my expectations for how to care for these books. The children know that all our books are our "treasures", and should be treated as such. Please help keep these books away from younger siblings.

Please find attached, some parent reading tips to use at home with your child. I hope you find them to be useful. Enjoy and happy reading!!!

Parent Tips

Give your child lots of opportunities to read aloud. Encourage your reader to practice every day!

- **Don't leave home without it.**
Have your child bring along a book or magazine any time you'll have to spend time waiting, such as at a doctor's or dentist's office. Fit in reading every chance you get!
- **Once is not enough.**
Encourage your child to re-read favorite books and poems. With repeated readings, he or she should be able to read more quickly and accurately.
- **Pick books that are at the right level.**
Help your child pick reading materials that are not too difficult. The aim is to give your child lots of successful reading experiences. Sometimes, slow readers will choose overly difficult books to "save face" and then are unable to actually read them.
- **Dig deeper into the story.**
Ask your child about the story you've just read together. Try questions that require your child to draw conclusions. Say something like, "Why do you think Clifford did that?" A child's involvement in retelling a story or answering questions goes a long way toward developing his or her comprehension skills.
- **Take control of the television.**
Encourage reading as a free-time activity, and set limits on the amount of time your child spends watching television or playing video games. It's difficult for reading to compete with these.
- **Play word games.**
Use blocks or a chalkboard to play word games with your child. First write out a word like *mat*. Then change the initial sound. Have your child sound out the word when it becomes *fat* and then when it becomes *sat*. Next change the final sound, so the word changes from *sat* to *sag* to *sap*. Then change the middle sound, so the word changes from *sap* to *sip*. Make a game of it!
- **Give your child a clue.**
If your child is stumbling while trying to sound out a word, use your finger to point to the next letter and ask what the letter usually sounds like. This won't always work because many letters have more than one sound.
- **I read to you, you read to me.**
Once your child can read, have him or her read aloud to you every day. You

can take turns — you read one page and your child the next. It's just another way to enjoy reading together.

- **Read at bedtime.**

At bedtime, tell your child he or she can choose either reading or sleeping. Most kids will choose to read, as long as you don't offer something more tempting... like TV. Children enjoy this special time with parents. You can spend it either with you reading to them or them reading to you or both.

- **Punctuate your reading.?!**

When you read aloud, read with expression. Discuss how punctuation on a page represents ways of speaking. You can say, for example, "When we talk, we usually pause a little bit at the end of a sentence. The way we show this pause in writing is to use a period."

- **Gently correct your young reader.**

When your child makes a mistake reading a word, gently point out the letters he or she overlooked or read incorrectly. Ask questions such as, "Do you remember what sound this letter makes?" Many beginning readers will guess wildly at a word based on its first letter. Children need to be encouraged to pay attention to all the letters in a word.

- **Be patient.**

When your child is trying to sound out an unfamiliar word, give him or her time to do so. If you've ever had to learn a foreign language, you know how difficult it can be to figure out a word you've never seen before.

"Reading is like riding a bike. You watch little ones beginning to ride a bike; they're wobbling all over the place. But as we practice and practice, we don't even think about pedaling anymore. Eventually we can ride with no hands."

— G. Reid Lyon
National Institutes of Health

Once a child has learned how to sound out words, the next step is to help him or her read more quickly and smoothly. How? Mostly with practice and encouragement. The more kids see and work with words, the more they are able to effortlessly decode them.

Parent Tips:

<http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders/parenttips.html>