

The Everyday Guide to Parents Helping Kids with Reading and Writing!

A Frontier College Resource Guide

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10 Reasons to Read with Your Child

- It's fun and it makes both you and your child feel good!
- You can build a better relationship with your child (bonding time).
- You can improve your confidence in your ability to support your child.
- Help your child to succeed in their personal goals in life.
- Children will have better attendance at school.
- Children will have better behavior at school.
- Children will get better marks.
- Increase your child's self-esteem.
- Increase your child's ability to foster better relationships.
- You and your child will develop a greater love for reading!



How Can I Encourage Reading?

Your everyday life is full of opportunities to encourage reading and writing. Here are just a few ideas...

In the home...

- **Catch them reading!** Make a point of praising your child if you find him/her reading, writing or doing homework on their own.
- **Let them catch you reading!** One of the most important things you can do as a parent to encourage reading for your child is to be a role model. Let your child see you reading, whether you're reading the comics, a novel, a poem, the newspaper, a biography, a cookbook, the TV Guide, on-line information whatever...role model the importance of reading in everyday life!
- **Find a book buddy!** Encourage your child to read to a friend, cousin or younger sibling.
- **Surf the web** together to find educational websites or on-line information.
- **Keep books in a safe place** so that kids learn that books are of value. Have lots of books to choose from!
- **Sing songs, rhymes and poems together.**
- **Celebrate Family Literacy Day** on January 27th every year.
- **Read dual-language books** or read in your first language.
- **Play board games** such as scrabble, boggle or others.

Out and about...

- **While on the bus**, read the advertisements together. Play word games.
- **While shopping**, read packages and labels and sale signs. Read the flyers together before or on the way to the grocery store.
- **Point out** writing on mugs, T-shirts, key chains and signs.



When reading...

- **Read** to your child, have your child read to you, take turns reading, read together at the same time, practice reading silently then discussing what you have read.
- **Be positive!** Praise them for trying and let them know making mistakes is normal and to be expected.
- **Give them time** and let them guess words before you read them.
- Let them read to the end of the line before correcting them. It's okay to tell them the words too.
- **Spot words.** Help them to spot smaller words inside bigger words.
- **Let them read their favourites** over and over (repetition is good when learning to read).
- **Make the story come to life!** Use different voices. Encourage them to read with expression.
- **Ask them questions when reading.** Examples include- What would you have done? What do you think will happen next? What colour is that duck? How many ducks are in the picture?
- **Have a dictionary** close by if your child doesn't understand a word.



How Do I Choose Good Books?

First and foremost, find out where the library is located in your community. Talk to the librarian about what books are appropriate for your child. Below are a few tips to help you choose books for your children.

Look for books that are...

- **Alphabet books:** these books reinforce the alphabet.
- **Picture books:** The illustrations can help tell the story. Try to find books with lots of colour and with interesting and engaging pictures.
- **Funny books:** Kids love to laugh!
- **Books with characters from various cultures:** Children need to see themselves and other cultures in the books they read.
- **Books with repetition:** A repeated sentence or phrase makes books easier to read.
- **Books based on television series:** Children love to read books with familiar characters, such as *Arthur* or the *Magic School Bus*.

Choosing books for young readers...

Choose books that focus on concepts for younger readers. Concepts can include...

- Alphabet
- Shapes
- Colours
- Counting

Beware of books that are...

- Too difficult for your child's reading level
- Have hard to read print.
- Scare children or are uninteresting to read.



How to encourage writing at home...

Make it a print friendly home!

Hobbies, interests and games...

- Play word games, for example: Scrabble, Boggle, Hangman, Concentration.
- Do crosswords and word searches together.
- Do crafts. List materials and write instructions. Then do the craft together.
- Collect and read sports cards.

Life Skills...

- Read and write recipes. Create shopping lists and to-do lists together.
- Look up something in the yellow pages, make an advertisement for something.
- Compile a personal address book/telephone book.
- Encourage journal writing with your child.
- Write letters to Santa, a superhero, a musician, etc.
- Make a calendar.

Music, Art, Poetry and Story writing...

- Read and write song lyrics together. Rap and read and talk about music.
- Read and write poetry.
- Have a written conversation.
- Read the TV Guide, watch a program and then discuss it.
- Write a story.
- Create birthday, Christmas, Valentines, Halloween and Easter cards.



How Can I Help My Child with Their Homework?

Before homework...

1. First things first...read over the instructions together. Make sure you both understand the assignment. Break down the assignment into smaller pieces if possible.
2. Build on a child's prior knowledge. Our ability to learn and remember information can be greatly increased merely by activating what we already know. Ask your child what they can tell you about the subject already.
3. Read over main headings and subheadings. Review table of contents or key points and summaries at the beginning or end of chapters.
4. Ask them to predict by looking over the illustrations, diagrams and charts in the text. Attempt to fill in any gaps in your child's knowledge of the subject.

During homework...

1. **YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED TO KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS!** Being unsure of an answer provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate to your child how to work through a problem. Avoid focusing **ONLY** on completing the assignment but rather **learning how to learn** is an important experience.
2. Read the text to your child. Have them read it to you. Take turns reading or read at the same time. Read silently together and discuss afterwards.
3. Talk about the text as you read it together.
4. Encourage kids to think out loud and ask questions.
5. Let them know that you won't know everything but show them how you go about finding out answers to questions i.e., call a friend, research in other books, find it in the dictionary, research on the web, use a scrap piece of paper etc.

6. Discuss key points that relate to the homework instructions.
7. Help your child to organize their thoughts out loud or on paper.
8. Help them if they seem stuck.

After homework...

1. The more your child discusses the text after she reads it, the greater the chance your child will remember what they have read. Use the 4 R's of Reading.

The 4 R's

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Retelling | What were the events, the main ideas and the characters of the story?
Talk about the "6 W's"- who, what, where, when, why and how. |
| Reflecting | Why was a particular decision made in the story? Interpret the text together. |
| Relating | How do characters or information in the story relate to you or your child?
Are they similar to your ideas or experiences? |
| Rewriting | How could the story be changed? What might happen next? How could the story have been written more clearly? |