

Reading Tool Kit for Elementary Students

Tips and Tools for Families with Elementary Age Children



TIP:

As your child is working on the different reading skills at school, one of the most important things that you at home can do is to read to your child on a daily basis. Reading to young children helps them develop a love of books, allows them to enjoy good literature and encourages them to become readers. Reading to older students can help them understand that books can be fun and informative and can encourage them to keep working on learning to read themselves.

Tools:

- Find a quiet place that is free from distractions like the sound of TV and other people talking.
- Help your child select books of interest in the school or public library. Ask the librarian for suggestions.
- For young children, feel free to choose a storybook with pictures.
- Sit with the child next to you or on your lap so they can see the words and pictures as you read. For younger students, point to the words as you read them.
- If the child is interested and willing, read the book again. This helps the child become more familiar with the story.
- Make reading time relaxing and enjoyable and let your child know how much you look forward to spending this time together.



TIP:

Good readers practice reading each day because they enjoy reading. Practice is the only way to become a better reader. Unfortunately, students who do not read well usually don't like to read and try to avoid practice.

Tools:

- Encourage your child to read out loud at home.
- When practicing, it is **VERY** important that students use reading material that is not too difficult for them.
- For struggling readers, school text books are NOT appropriate for practice at home. These books should be read to your child.
- Ask your child's teacher for material that matches his/her reading level for practice at home. The teacher(s) may send home special reading material, or may recommend books that can be checked out of the library.
- Ask your child's teacher how to help if your child doesn't know



how to read a particular word. If you are not sure what to do, the best thing is to just read the word to the child and then ask her/him to read the word correctly.

- Remember that students should be able to read independently (without your help) most of the words in material used for practice.
- Parents and family members should not try to teach reading.
- Your role is to support what is taught at school.
- Talk to the teacher to discuss other ways that you can help your child if you find that practicing reading aloud at home is too difficult for him or her.



TIP:

Good readers must develop phonemic awareness (listening for sounds in words). This skill can be easily reinforced at home.

Tools:

- Read books with rhyming words to your child.
- Play word games with rhyming words. For example: what word rhymes with “dad”? For example: sad, mad, bad, glad.
- Make a list of words that rhyme, both real words and made up words. For example: man, pan, can, fan, zan.
- Ask your child to pick out the words that don’t rhyme. For example: cat, fat, chair, bat.
- Practice saying each sound in a simple word. For example: What is the first sound in bat? What is the last sound? What is the middle sound? Use words with two or three sounds.
- Play a word game in which you say a word and then ask the child to say the word with a sound missing. For example, say “Hat”; now say it without the /h/ sound. The answer is ‘at’. Be sure to use sounds, not letter names, for this game. Taking off the first sound is easiest. Later the student can try taking off the last sound.
- Ask your child’s teacher to suggest activities that would be most appropriate for your child.



TIP:

Good readers must develop fluency (the ability to read smoothly and when reading aloud with expression) and automaticity (the ability to read most words automatically). Without these skills, students cannot understand the meaning of sentences and paragraphs.

Tools:

- Ask the teacher for a list of vocabulary words for practice at home. These should be words that your child has learned at school and just needs to practice.
- Ask the teacher for stories to use for practice at home. Read the story or parts of the story aloud (modeling reading with expression), while your child follows the text with his or her eyes. You may point to each word as you read it, or slide your finger along with the words. Either way, be sure the child actually looks at the words as they are being read out loud. Next have your child read the same passage with you.

- Read a story out loud and stop on certain words and ask your child to read those words. They should be words that the student is working on at school. This exercise requires the student to follow the text carefully. The teacher can help with this activity by giving parents a list of words that can be targeted.
- Ask your child to read a portion of a story silently and tell you what has been read. (Be sure the story is one that the child can read independently). Next, ask the child to read the same portion out loud. Keep in mind that oral reading is more stressful and difficult than silent reading.
- Remember that practice reading materials should be carefully selected by the teacher and should be at a level of difficulty that allows students to read most of the words accurately, without a great deal of effort.



Tip:
Good readers must develop good comprehension skills.

Tools:

- Before reading the story, talk with your child about the topic. For example, if the story is set in another country, you may want to find the country on the map and discuss how life is both similar and different from life in this country.
- Talk about what important words in the story mean. It is important for your child to learn that words can have several meanings.
- After reading a section or page of a story, ask the child to describe what has happened and then predict what might happen next.
- Ask the student to picture what he or she has read. For example: ask her/him to describe a character in the story. Your child can use the information actually in the story and then use her or his imagination to add details. The student can then describe how a scene in the story would look and how it might change as the story develops.



Whatever the activity, encourage your child!

Cheer him on!

Let her know that you appreciate her effort!

For more information or assistance, contact **ecac**:



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