

Tips for Reading with a Child

- **Talk and read, read and talk.** As one volunteer put it, *“Take time to speak with the student. Get to know him or her. The reading is more effective after you have some trust with the child.”*
- **Enjoy the illustrations.** Books reflect a variety of artistic styles and materials.
- **Share your love of reading and books.** Your enthusiasm will inspire your student. They are often interested to hear that you read *Curious George* or Dr. Seuss when you were young, or that your kids love *Amelia Bedelia*.
- **Identify the title, author, and illustrator.** Talk about the difference between an author and illustrator and demonstrate where to find that information on the cover.
- **Have a look at the end pages.** They often have interesting illustrations and sometimes even contain part of the story.
- **Read expressively.** Your student will be more likely to concentrate if the story is read with feeling and varying tones. Adjust your pace to fit the events in the story.
- **Read slowly.** Both you and the student will be able to visualize and enjoy the story more if the reading pace is slow.
- **Vary the length and subject matter of your readings.** Explore a variety of books, encouraging your student to read both chapter and picture books.
- **Remember that reading aloud does not come naturally** to many people. It takes practice to do it successfully with others.
- Occasionally, when a child asks a question involving the text, **look up the answer in a reference book.** This reinforces library skills and expands a child’s knowledge base.
- **Encourage interaction.** Stop reading occasionally to ask questions. Discuss the story, the vocabulary, the illustrations, and anything that comes up before, during, and after the reading.
- **Give positive reinforcement and praise.** It doesn’t need to be lavish. A simple “wow” or “you did it” will be enough to lift a student’s confidence.
- **Structure your sessions.** If it’s helpful, you can make daily, monthly, or yearly goals and write them down to refer to throughout the weeks. Some examples are:
 - “Let’s read three Dr. Seuss books this year.”
 - “Let’s learn about two new animals this month.”
 - “Let’s read one chapter today.”
- **Think beyond books.** We provide a variety of books for all interests and levels, but if your student has a favorite topic, you can go even further! Use your imagination to explore topics in depth. For example, if your student likes movies, you can read reviews of children’s movies from the newspaper, write your own reviews, find some magazines featuring a favorite actor, or take a book you enjoyed and turn it into illustrated film strips.
- **Utilize other activities.** We provide each pair with a notebook that can be used to supplement your reading sessions. These are often used to play hangman, write stories, draw characters from a book, or write letters to teachers or family members. We also have literacy activities and games available. These activities are a bridge to reading, and may be used to encourage a reluctant reader, spend the last few minutes of a session, or vary your sessions as you see fit.