

TIPS | for parents of Kindergartners

Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ Talk to your child.

Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.

■ Say silly tongue twisters.

Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

■ Read it and experience it.

Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.

■ Use your child's name.

Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John, jump*. And they both begin with the same letter, J."

■ Play with puppets.

Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is *Mark*. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *park* rhyme with *Mark*? Does *ball* rhyme with *Mark*?"

■ Trace and say letters.

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

■ Write it down.

Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage your child to use the letters and sounds he or she is learning about in school.

■ Play sound games.

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? *m - o - p*." Hold each sound longer than normal.

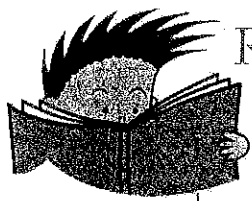
■ Read it again and again.

Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.

■ Talk about letters and sounds.

Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmmm."

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.



TIPS | for parents of First Graders

Give your child lots of opportunities to read aloud. Inspire your young reader to practice every day! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ **Don't leave home without it.**

Bring along a book or magazine any time your child has to wait, such as at a doctor's office. Always try to fit in reading!

■ **Once is not enough.**

Encourage your child to re-read favorite books and poems. Re-reading helps kids read more quickly and accurately.

■ **Dig deeper into the story.**

Ask your child questions about the story you've just read. Say something like, "Why do you think Clifford did that?"

■ **Take control of the television.**

It's difficult for reading to compete with TV and video games. Encourage reading as a free-time activity.

■ **Be patient.**

When your child is trying to sound out an unfamiliar word, give him or her time to do so. Remind your child to look closely at the first letter or letters of the word.

■ **Pick books that are at the right level.**

Help your child pick books that are not too difficult. The aim is to give your child lots of successful reading experiences.

■ **Play word games.**

Have your child sound out the word as you change it from *mat* to *fat* to *sat*; from *sat* to *sag* to *sap*; and from *sap* to *sip*.

■ **I read to you, you read to me.**

Take turns reading aloud at bedtime. Kids enjoy this special time with their parents.

■ **Gently correct your young reader.**

When your child makes a mistake, gently point out the letters he or she overlooked or read incorrectly. Many beginning readers will guess wildly at a word based on its first letter.

■ **Talk, talk, talk!**

Talk with your child every day about school and things going on around the house. Sprinkle some interesting words into the conversation, and build on words you've talked about in the past.

■ **Write, write, write!**

Ask your child to help you write out the grocery list, a thank you note to Grandma, or to keep a journal of special things that happen at home. When writing, encourage your child to use the letter and sound patterns he or she is learning at school.

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TIPS | for parents of Second Graders

Find ways to read, write, and tell stories together with your child. Always applaud your young reader and beginning story writer! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ **Tell family tales.**

Children love to hear stories about their family. Talk about a funny thing that happened when you were young.

■ **Create a writing toolbox.**

Fill a box with drawing and writing materials. Find opportunities for your child to write, such as the shopping list, thank you notes, or birthday cards.

■ **Be your child's #1 fan.**

Ask your child to read aloud what he or she has written for school. Be an enthusiastic listener.

■ **One more time with feeling.**

When your child has sounded out an unfamiliar word, have him or her re-read that sentence. Often kids are so busy figuring out a word they lose the meaning of what they've just read.

■ **Invite an author to class.**

Ask an author to talk to your child's class about the writing process. Young children often think they aren't smart enough if they can't sit down and write a perfect story on the first try.

■ **Create a book together.**

Fold pieces of paper in half and staple them to make a book. Ask your child to write sentences on each page and add his or her own illustrations.

■ **Do storytelling on the go.**

Take turns adding to a story the two of you make up while riding in a car or bus. Try making the story funny or spooky.

■ **Point out the relationship between words.**

Explain how related words have similar spellings and meanings. Show how a word like *knowledge*, for example, relates to a word like *know*.

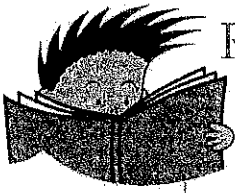
■ **Use a writing checklist.**

Have your child create a writing checklist with reminders such as, "Do all of my sentences start with a capital? Yes/No."

■ **Quick, quick.**

Use new words your child has learned in lively flash card or computer drills. Sometimes these help kids automatically recognize and read words, especially those that are used frequently.

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TIPS | for parents of Third Graders

Read about it, talk about it, and think about it! Find ways for your child to build understanding, the ultimate goal of learning how to read. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ **Make books special.**

Turn reading into something special. Take your kids to the library, help them get their own library card, read with them, and buy them books as gifts. Have a favorite place for books in your home or, even better, put books everywhere.

■ **Get them to read another one.**

Find ways to encourage your child to pick up another book. Introduce him or her to a series like *The Boxcar Children* or *The Magic Tree House* or to a second book by a favorite author, or ask the librarian for additional suggestions.

■ **Crack open the dictionary.**

Let your child see you use a dictionary. Say, "Hm, I'm not sure what that word means... I think I'll look it up."

■ **Talk about what you see and do.**

Talk about everyday activities to build your child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together, visiting somewhere new, or after watching a TV show.

■ **First drafts are rough.**

Encourage your child when writing. Remind him or her that writing involves several steps. No one does it perfectly the first time.

■ **Different strokes for different folks.**

Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of writing. Some kids, especially boys, prefer nonfiction books.

■ **Teach your child some "mind tricks".**

Show your child how to summarize a story in a few sentences or how to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend and remember.

■ **"Are we there yet?"**

Use the time spent in the car or bus for wordplay. Talk about how jam means something you put on toast as well as cars stuck in traffic. How many other homonyms can your child think of? When kids are highly familiar with the meaning of a word, they have less difficulty reading it.

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Reading Strategies for All Readers

Mrs. Zannini - KM Reading Specialist



The following handout explains what independent reading strategies our children at KM are learning about. Use this information if you are looking for ways to reinforce their learning at home.

- When reading with your child, you can focus your reading on one of these aspects. Your child should be able to tell you exactly what goal and strategy he/she is working on: "I am working on my accuracy" and his /her strategy: "I am looking for small words inside big words to help me read new words".
- Research shows that when students know exactly what they need to work on, and why, they are much more successful in meeting their goals! You can do this at home too! ☺ This is divided into 4 categories: Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expand Vocabulary.

Comprehension- "I understand what I read."

- **Check for Understanding:** We have learned that it is very important to not only do our best reading, but to also do our best thinking! We know it is necessary to stop often during reading to make sure we have understood what we are reading. Practice this at home by stopping every so often during the story. Your child should be able to give a quick summary of what they just read. Who was the story about? What has happened so far? Go ahead and use the words, "Let's check for understanding," with your child. They know just what it means! ☺
- **Back up and Reread:** Have you ever read a page or two of a book and suddenly realized that you don't have a clue what you just read? What do you probably do? You back up and reread it! This is a skill that children need to be taught over and over. This strategy is important for children to try when they have not understood something they just read. By backing up and reading a section or page over, they will hopefully take their time and focus in more which will lead to a clearer understanding!
- **Name the setting:** The setting is where the story is occurring and when it is happening.
- **Know the title, author and illustrator:** Your child should know how to recognize the title, author and illustrator (if there is one) in every book that they read.
- **Retell the story:** Tell what happened at the beginning, middle and end of the story.
- **Making connections:** We discussed 3 different connections that the student can make while reading.
 - **Text to Self:** The student tells how he/she has something in common with the characters or the story.
 - **Text to World:** The student makes a connection with the knowledge that he has with something in the book.
 - **Text to Text:** The student makes a connection between two books (same characters, setting, etc.)
- **Identify Fiction or Non-Fiction:** The student can tell if it is real facts (non- fiction) or a made up story (fiction).

- **Make predictions:** Your child is practicing stopping in the story and thinking about what might happen next. It should make sense with what is happening in the story but doesn't have to be correct.
- **Know author's purpose:** Your student can determine what the author's purpose was in writing the book (to inform, to entertain, etc.).
- **Use text features:** This is most important in non fiction text. The student can use titles, headings, captions, and graphics to understand more about what is happening in the book.
- **Ask questions throughout reading:** Your child is working on thinking and asking why while reading. They are realizing that good readers continue to ask questions throughout the reading process.

Accuracy- "I can read the words."

- **Cross-Checking:** Your child has been learning to stop when they have just read a sentence that doesn't make sense or if they get to a word that they just don't know. After they find that tricky word, they ask themselves some questions: "Does the word I'm saying (or thinking it could be) match up with the letters or picture I see on the page?" "Does it sound right?" "Does it make sense?"
- **Tap the word:** This is a strategy that we emphasize in Foundations (our phonics program) and use to read and spell words. Your child should be able to use their fingers to tap out each sound (it is a tactile way to sound out words).
- **Say it fast:** Your child is working on reading the words after tapping the word. Your child should get their mouth ready to say the sounds, say and tap each sound, and then say the sounds fast to say the word.
- **Know letters and sounds:** We have to know the sounds of the words to read and the letter names to spell.
- **Flip the sound-** This is a strategy that the students use as they begin to encounter words with long vowels. We have discussed short vowels so it is natural for them to read the words with a short vowel sound. If that way does not make sense in the story we say, "Flip the Sound." They then say the long vowel sound (it always says its name). Example: If the word "cake" is in the story, your child may say "cak". That does not make sense. So then, they should say the long vowel sound and say "cake". That word should make sense with the pictures or rest of the sentence.
- **Find Chunks in words:** This means that the student is finding smaller words or parts in the larger word.
- **Know trick words or sight words:** Your child is practicing reading our trick words in stories. Your child should be able to recognize these words automatically while reading.
- **Play with rhyming words:** Students can see a word like "cat" and know the words, "mat, hat, bat, etc.
- **Identify compound words:** Students notice that there are smaller words in larger words. For example, cupcake is a compound word that students can read if they break the word into its two words.
- **Skip the word and come back:** The student can skip the word and then come back after reading the rest of the sentence. It might give context to what the word is and how to say it.

Fluency- "I can read smoothly, with expression."

- **Choose Good Fit Books:** This is a BIG one for children! We have learned that it is SO important to spend time reading books that are good fit books for each of us (we used shoes to see how different people need different size shoes). It is very important for your child to be able to read books that they can read independently with very few to NO errors. We use the 3 finger rule- if they can't read more than 3 words on a page then the book is too hard right now. This will help them become smooth (fluent) readers. I meet with each child often so that they can show me the just-right books in their book tote. After your child reads a book to you at home, ask them to share how they felt about the book. "Did the book feel too easy, too hard, or just right? Why?"
- **Read and read it again:** Your child is learning that when you are reading sometimes you need to read it multiple times to read it the correct way. We have talked about how it sounds to read so that people enjoy listening to it and not like a robot.
- **Read and talk like the characters:** This means that your child is working on expression and making the book come to life. Add emphasis on different characters and what they are saying. If there is something exciting going on in the story, make it sound exciting and how the characters really would sound.
- **Read to the end of the sentence:** It always sounds good to read a book and not read choppy or word by word. As adults, we know that a sentence means to pause in reading. That is how we want our students to read. So, your child is working on reading the entire sentence without stopping. It may take a few times to get it right, but that is what practice is for. ☺ Make it like a game and see how many sentences they can read without stopping in the middle of the sentence.

Expand Vocabulary- I know, find, and use interesting words."

- **Tune into Interesting Words:** We are excited to learn new words and figure out what words mean. When this happens at school, the word is explained and then added to a classroom Word Collector or wall. We refer back to the words often as this will deepen their understanding of them and expand their vocabularies. Perhaps you could keep a notebook at home to jot down interesting words that you and your child come across when reading.
- **Voracious Reading:** This is a strategy that we used to get excited about reading and finding new words while we read. Reading takes practice and is something we must do a lot to be able to read our best. We want to read as much as we can to get better in reading!
- **Ask for help defining the word:** Student can ask another person (adult or other student) if they come across a word they do not know. The student records the word and page number on a new words chart and then can ask when reading time is over (if it is silent reading time).
- **Use a tool- dictionary, thesaurus, or glossary:** The student can use a dictionary as a tool when they don't know a word while reading.
- **Use other words to help (context) and prior knowledge:** Students can use words within the rest of the sentence or paragraph to know what a word means.