

Family Support Documents

FAMILY SUPPORT: PRECONVENTIONAL READER (AGES 3–5)

- ◆ Read books with appealing pictures that match your child's age and interests. Children at this age like books with rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.
- ◆ Have a cozy reading corner that invites reading.
- ◆ Read aloud daily, even if it's only for 10 minutes. Snuggle up on the couch or hold your child in your lap.
- ◆ Reading at bedtime is a wonderful way to end the day.
- ◆ Talk about the story and pictures in the books you read together. This time together should be natural and fun.
- ◆ Encourage risk-taking as children learn to read and memorize their first books. Have your child chime in on repeated lines or a chorus.
- ◆ Respond enthusiastically to early attempts at reading. Never say, "She's not reading. She has just memorized the book." Memorizing is one of the first steps in learning to read.
- ◆ Play with magnetic letters on the refrigerator or plastic letters in the tub.
- ◆ Encourage children to notice words in their world, such as signs, logos, and labels.
- ◆ Help your child learn to recognize his or her name in print.
- ◆ Share your love of books and reading.
- ◆ Visit bookstores and libraries with your child.
- ◆ Take your child to hear authors or storytellers at bookstores or the library.
- ◆ Make singing and talking together part of your daily routine.
- ◆ Watch TV shows together, such as *Sesame Street*, that incorporate reading and books.
- ◆ Buy or make tapes of favorite songs and books to listen to at home or in the car.

FAMILY SUPPORT: EMERGING READER (AGES 4–6)

- ◆ Read aloud daily to your child.
- ◆ Make a cozy place to read at home.
- ◆ Talk about the books and materials you read with your child. Model reading.
- ◆ Go to the library regularly and visit bookstores. The people who work there can often help you find just the right books for your child.
- ◆ Check out books on tape from the library. Listen to them at bedtime or in the car.
- ◆ Take books everywhere you go. Keep books in the car and in every room.
- ◆ Write notes to your child (in his or her lunchbox, on the bed, on the mirror, or under the pillow) using simple words.
- ◆ Read picture books with predictable patterns and rhymes and familiar stories.
- ◆ Re-read favorite stories and poems.
- ◆ Encourage your child to chime in as you read stories, sing songs, or recite poems.
- ◆ Ask questions about what you read to help your child connect books with their life and experiences.
- ◆ Ask your child to guess what will happen next as you read aloud.
- ◆ Reinforce early reading attempts *without correcting mistakes*.
- ◆ Celebrate early memorizing as reading (it's the first step!).
- ◆ Point out words around you (such as signs, logos, commercials, and billboards).
- ◆ Tell stories and ask family members and friends to tell stories.
- ◆ Encourage your child to tell stories from pictures in magazines and newspapers.
- ◆ Tape record your child telling a story. Send it to relatives or friends.

FAMILY SUPPORT: DEVELOPING READER (AGES 5–7)

- ◆ Read different things aloud in addition to stories (such as recipes, letters, and directions).
- ◆ Subscribe to a magazine (such as *Sesame Street*, or *Ranger Rick*) and read it together.
- ◆ Visit bookstores and libraries regularly.
- ◆ Find books with patterns, rhythm, and rhyme that help children as they first begin to read on their own.
- ◆ Make “word cards” of the words your child can read. Make sentences with the words. The focus is on “playing with the words” rather than drilling!
- ◆ Encourage your child to read to friends, children in your family, or other relatives.
- ◆ As you read together, ask your child to predict what might happen next or talk about how the book relates to your child's life.
- ◆ Once in awhile, make a mistake while you're reading and problem-solve with your child about how to figure out what would make more sense.
- ◆ Talk about authors, illustrators, or interesting words.
- ◆ Talk about the characters in the books you read. Ask questions such as, "Does that character remind you of anyone you know or a character in another book?"
- ◆ After reading a story aloud, retell it in your own words with your child's help.
- ◆ Keep a list of "Favorite Books We've Read" or a wish list of "Books to Buy."
- ◆ Ask friends and relatives to give books as gifts.
- ◆ Read the Sunday comics with your child.
- ◆ Watch educational TV shows together, like *Reading Rainbow*.
- ◆ Expose your child to computer games related to reading (such as *Reader Rabbit* and *Magic Schoolbus*).

FAMILY SUPPORT: BEGINNING READER (AGES 6–8)

- ◆ Read aloud daily. Your child might be ready for you to read a chapter book aloud, a chapter or two each night. Children also enjoy picture books, nonfiction, and joke books.
- ◆ Begin to read series books. If you read a few, children will often read the rest of the series on their own.
- ◆ Read poems, magazines, cartoons, recipes, maps, and nonfiction, as well as fiction.
- ◆ Provide time each night for your child to read on his or her own (10–15 minutes).
- ◆ Help your child find books at the right reading level, since at this stage children need lots of practice to become fluent readers. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions.
- ◆ Visit bookstores and libraries regularly.
- ◆ Talk about books you enjoyed when you were little.
- ◆ Give books as gifts.
- ◆ Watch television shows together (such as *Reading Rainbow*) or movies based on children's books.
- ◆ Be supportive as your child reads his or her first *I Can Read* books. Help with difficult words so your child can keep the flow of the story.
- ◆ Ask your child to make predictions as you read a story. ("What do you think this story will be about?" "What do you think will happen next?")
- ◆ Encourage your child to re-read a sentence when it doesn't make sense.
- ◆ Ask your child to retell a story you have read together.
- ◆ Point out ways to figure out words in addition to "sounding it out" (such as looking at the picture, breaking the word into smaller words, reading on, or thinking what would make sense).
- ◆ Point out punctuation as you read aloud. ("Oops, an exclamation mark! I'd better read that a little louder.")
- ◆ Talk about the strategies you use as a reader when you're looking for a book, when you come across a word you don't know, or want to learn more about something.

FAMILY SUPPORT: EXPANDING READER (AGES 7–9)

- ◆ Keep reading to your child, even when he or she can read independently.
- ◆ Provide time for your child to read at night (15–30 minutes).
- ◆ Encourage your child to practice reading aloud to siblings, relatives, or senior citizens.
- ◆ Use the public library for storyteller sessions, books on tape, book lists, and recommendations.
- ◆ Look for books that match your child's interests. (Bookstore staff, librarians, and your child's teacher can help you.)
- ◆ Talk about how you select books and the types of things you like to read.
- ◆ Have your child keep a list of books he or she finishes or would like as gifts.
- ◆ Help your child learn how to find information in books.
- ◆ Model how you look up words you don't know in a dictionary.
- ◆ Subscribe to children's magazines, such as *Kid City*, *Ranger Rick*, or *Contact Kids*.
- ◆ Talk about the characters from books, movies, and television programs.
- ◆ Read and compare several versions of a story (such as a fairy tale or folktale).
- ◆ When your child reads aloud and makes a mistake, don't correct your child right way. Provide enough time for your child to self-correct.
- ◆ Talk with your child about his/her reading strategies. Give positive encouragement.
- ◆ Play word games, such as *Boggle*, *Hangman*, or *Junior Scrabble*.
- ◆ Cook together. Ask your child to read and explain the directions.
- ◆ Ask relatives to send your child postcards when they go on trips.

FAMILY SUPPORT: BRIDGING READER (AGES 8–10)

- ◆ Continue reading aloud to your child. You can model fluent reading.
- ◆ Provide a reading routine when everyone in the family reads (30 minutes).
- ◆ Children at this age often delve into series books, such as *Goosebumps*, *Nancy Drew*, *The Baby-Sitter's Club* or *Animorphs*. This comfort zone helps build fluency. Go to the library so your child can get the next book in the series!
- ◆ Invite your child to read more challenging books, as well as books at his/her level.
- ◆ Encourage your child to try new genres of reading (poetry, fantasy, and nonfiction).
- ◆ Have your child keep a list of "Books I've Read" or "Favorite Books."
- ◆ Talk together about why you like or dislike certain books or authors.
- ◆ Talk about interesting words and language.
- ◆ Look up new words together in a dictionary.
- ◆ Talk about the characters, theme, and exciting or favorite parts in movies or books.
- ◆ Go to a local children's theatre. If the play is based on a book, read it together before you go, then compare the book and the play.
- ◆ Encourage your child to read aloud a favorite book, poem, or story to friends, relatives, or to younger children.
- ◆ Subscribe to children's magazines that match your child's interests, such as *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, *American Girl*, or *Zillions: Consumer Reports for Kids*.
- ◆ Discuss facts and opinions about community events or world news.
- ◆ When your child asks questions, seek answers together in books, encyclopedias, the newspaper, or on the Internet.

FAMILY SUPPORT: FLUENT READER (AGES 9–11)

- ◆ Continue reading aloud to your child. This type of shared reading opens the door for conversation about reading and life.
- ◆ Provide time for your child to read (30–40 minutes per day) on a regular basis. Research shows a direct correlation between how much a student reads during the day and reading achievement and success in school.
- ◆ Provide a quiet place for homework, writing, and reading.
- ◆ Listen to books on tape in the car, especially on long trips.
- ◆ Visit the public library regularly to check out books and tapes and to find information.
- ◆ Help your child find books. Keep up with new children's books by talking to teachers, friends, librarians, and bookstore staff. Encourage your child to try new genres and types of books.
- ◆ Read book reviews in newspapers and magazines, then look for those books in the library.
- ◆ Talk about the books and materials you read and how you find new books.
- ◆ Help your child find information in books, in articles, and on Internet.
- ◆ Look up the meaning of an interesting word together. Talk about the interesting words you find as you read.
- ◆ Ask your child to read aloud a favorite book, poem or story into a tape recorder and send the tape to a younger child far away as a gift.
- ◆ Encourage your child to participate in community programs that include reading and writing, such as writing contests, summer reading programs, or reading to younger children at the library.
- ◆ Point out what your child does well as a reader and celebrate successes.

FAMILY SUPPORT: PROFICIENT READER (AGES 10–13)

- ◆ Continue reading aloud to your child. Read young adult novels together. It's an important way to stay connected as your child grows into adolescence.
- ◆ Read the newspaper and magazines and discuss articles together.
- ◆ Provide a quiet place for homework, writing, and reading.
- ◆ Help your child make time for reading and set goals as a reader.
- ◆ Visit the public library regularly to check out books and do research.
- ◆ Help your child find books. Keep up with new young adult and children's books by talking to teachers, friends, librarians, and bookstore staff. Read some of the books yourself so you can talk about them with your child.
- ◆ Join a parent/child book club.
- ◆ Collect books by a favorite author. Have your child write to the author. Send the letter to the publisher listed near the copyright information in the front of the book.
- ◆ Encourage wide reading of different genres and types of texts.
- ◆ Provide support as your child begins to read informational texts in different subject areas.
- ◆ Do crossword puzzles together.
- ◆ Discuss the concepts, symbols, well-written passages, and the author's craft as you read. Reading a book together also provides an opportunity to talk about issues.
- ◆ Talk about deeper levels of meaning in song lyrics.
- ◆ Talk about multiple perspectives and the complexity of issues in the news.

FAMILY SUPPORT: CONNECTING READER (AGES 11–14) AND INDEPENDENT READER

- ◆ Continue reading aloud to your child. Read young adult or adult novels together. This may be the only time you can have genuine conversations with your teenager!
- ◆ Read the same books your child is reading so you can talk about the books together.
- ◆ Continue to visit the public library.
- ◆ Talk about the books and materials you are reading. Acknowledge your teen's mature interests and recommend appropriate adult books.
- ◆ Discuss the concepts, symbols, well-written passages, and the author's craft as you read.
- ◆ Help your child make time for reading and set goals as a reader.
- ◆ Help your child find books. Keep up with new books by talking to teachers, friends, librarians, and bookstore staff. Share book reviews.
- ◆ Encourage wide reading of many genres and types of texts.
- ◆ Ask your child to discuss his or her favorite genres, titles, and authors.
- ◆ Ask your child to explain why he or she likes or dislikes a book or author.
- ◆ Discuss articles and editorials from the newspaper. Share the sports page or entertainment section.
- ◆ Have your child read the map when you're going somewhere new.
- ◆ Provide support as your child reads informational texts in many subject areas.
- ◆ Provide encouragement as your child tackles challenging reading projects.
- ◆ Give your child a subscription to a teen or adult magazine based on his or her interests. Even if you might prefer a different subject matter, it will keep your child reading at an age when reading tends to decline.
- ◆ Start a mother-daughter book club with friends (or father-daughter, mother-son, etc.).