

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Great Valley Elementary Schools

## Refresh your family's reading habits at the beginning of the school year

Reading with your child every day is one of the most effective ways to improve literacy skills. Reading together also fosters strong family bonds and creates opportunities to have meaningful interactions.

To add interest to your family's reading routine, include a few of these ideas:

- **Morning mystery.** Kick start the day by reading a short mystery or adventure story together over breakfast.
- **Nature narratives.** Take your storytime outdoors by reading books in a garden, park or backyard.
- **Artistic analysis.** Explore picture books together and encourage your child to interpret the illustrations and create new stories.
- **Travel tales.** Turn car rides into storytime sessions by listening to audiobooks as a family.



## Turn your elementary school student into a book critic

After finishing a new book, encourage your child to dive deeper by writing a short review. In a review, your child should include the book's name, its author and responses to questions such as:

- **What did I like about this book?**
- **What do I wish were different?**
- **Would I recommend this book** to one of my friends?  
Why or why not?

Thinking about books can foster a greater appreciation for reading, strengthen thinking skills and nurture your child's cognitive abilities. Keep the reviews in a notebook so your child can enjoy rereading past thoughts.

## Music enhances reading skills

Language skills grow when children sing along to their favorite tunes. And rhyming patterns in songs can help boost memory skills, too.

To use music to build reading skills:

- **Read the lyrics** as you and your child listen to a song.
- **Talk about word endings** that make up rhymes.
- **Listen to music** (and sing along) in the car and while you do chores at home.



## Create the perfect reading nook

Help your child create a special place at home for reading. You don't need a lot of space. Just include:

- **A box or basket** filled with a variety of appealing reading material.
- **Comfortable surroundings.** It can be a soft chair or a pile of pillows. Don't forget a bright reading lamp, too!



## Share nonfiction reading strategies

Nonfiction reading assignments are easier to comprehend when your child:

- **Rewrites headings** into questions. Answering those questions can help your child review the content.
- **Pays attention** to words in bold type. This indicates that they're important.
- **Examines the images**, such as graphs and pictures.
- **Answers any questions** that appear at the end of the section.



## Perseverance and a positive outlook can help your child overcome reading challenges

Reading is part of many home and school activities, so if your child struggles with reading, it can affect every part of life.

To help your child cope and keep reading:

- **Consult experts, including the teacher.** Ask about realistic expectations. Is your child reading at grade level? If not, what help is available?
- **Use reading materials at home** that minimize frustration. Choose books that are easy to read and understand. They should have very few difficult words.
- **Stay positive about learning.** Talk about how your child's strengths in other areas can help with reading. Praise your child for effort and persistence.



### Talking builds language skills

Having frequent back-and-forth conversations with your child provides proven benefits. Your child builds vocabulary and conversation skills, develops thought patterns and makes connections that will boost language and reading skills, too. Make time to talk together every day!



### Engage your child in literacy activities

Strong reading skills make it easier to learn every school subject. Here are three fun reading-related activities to try:

1. **Follow current events.** Is there a developing news story that interests your child? Read the latest reports together each night.
2. **Sign your child up** for a pen pal. Kids love receiving mail and learning about life in other countries. Ask your child's teacher about how to get involved.
3. **Take a virtual field trip.** Have your child research online about attractions in your area, such as museums. Then, ask your student to be your tour guide through their websites and share interesting facts.



### For lower elementary readers:

- ***The Invisible String*** by Patrice Karst. Offer hope in face of loneliness, separation and loss with this simple story about the unbreakable connections of loved ones.
- ***Scribble Stones*** by Diane Alber. Ignite your child's creativity with this story about a little stone who wanted to spread kindness.



### For upper elementary readers:

- ***Fish in a Tree*** by Lynda Mullaly Hunt. This is an inspiring story about a girl whose reading disorder makes her feel different.
- ***Max Goes to the Space Station*** by Jeffrey Bennett. Follow Max the Dog on his trip to the International Space Station and learn about space travel!



**Q:** No matter what I suggest, my second grader just doesn't like to read independently. What can I do?

**A:** When children are still learning to read in the early grades, they can become frustrated. Rather than pushing your child to work on reading skills, focus on making reading fun! Keep interesting reading material on

hand. Read in new places, such as under a table. Don't use reading as a punishment. Be patient and keep reading together!

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