

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Caloosa Elementary School

Make trips to the library an enriching part of your family's school year routine

Now that the hustle and bustle of a new school year has begun, don't forget about your public library! Regular family trips will help you keep your home stocked with wonderful things for everyone to read.

- During your library visits, encourage your elementary schooler to check out a variety of reading materials, including:
- **Books** related to things your child is learning about in school.
 - **Audiobooks.**
 - **Biographies** about inspirational people.
 - **Graphic novels** and comics.
 - **Magazines** and newspapers.
 - **Books** that are slightly above your child's reading level to read together.
 - **Poetry collections.**
 - **Nonfiction texts** about your child's interests and hobbies.



Spend quality time reading together

When you set aside some time each day to read with your child, the benefits are endless. For the best results:

- **Select a time to read together** when your child is most receptive. Make it a part of the day that you both look forward to.
- **Talk about the books you read.** Ask your child questions that spark thinking: *Do you agree with what the main character did? What do you think will happen next? Would you have ended the story a different way?*
- **Give an encore performance.** Many kids like to hear stories again and again—and that's great. The more your child listens to a story, the more your child can learn from it.
- **Admire other performers.** Listen to professional storytellers or go to story hours at the library. Try audiobooks, too.

Ask questions to help your child find the right book

Learning how to choose a book is an important step for readers. When deciding on a book to read, ask your child these questions:

- **Does the title** sound interesting?
- **Is the text** easy to read? Do you know most of the words on the first page?
- **Do you like** the pictures?
- **Are you “hooked”** after reading the first few lines?



Beginning, middle or end?

Here's a tasty game to help your child with overall sound recognition:

Hide a raisin or piece of cereal in one of three cups. Next, ask your child where a letter falls in a particular word, such as the *m* in *camel*. The goal is for your child to select the right cup—in this case, the middle one—and eat the treat inside.



Music enhances reading skills

Language skills grow when children sing along to their favorite tunes. And rhyming patterns in songs can help boost kids' recall, too. To use music to build reading skills:

- **Read the lyrics** as you and your child listen to a song.
- **Sing favorite songs** together as a family.
- **Listen to music** (and sing along) in the car and while you do chores at home.



Boost interest by being a reading role model

Reading role models demonstrate that reading is an essential part of life. Children who see adult family members reading are often more motivated to read themselves.

To demonstrate that reading is informative and fun:

- **Let your child** see you reading something every day.
- **Tell your child** *why* you are reading. Are you reading for information, to double-check something or for enjoyment?
- **Share an interesting part** of something you're reading. Your child may be motivated to finish reading it independently.
- **Use your library card.** When you take your child to the library, find something to check out for yourself.
- **Give books as gifts.** Show your child that books are special by giving them as gifts.
- **Ask relatives to support** your child's reading habits. Could they record themselves reading a book aloud?



Fun activities to try after reading a book

The pleasure of reading doesn't have to stop when the book ends! After reading a great book, encourage your child to:

- **Get into character.** Have your child read some exciting dialogue from the book out loud.
- **Draw a map.** Your child can draw the area where the story takes place.
- **Design costumes.** Your child can sketch pictures of the type of clothing each character might wear.
- **Invite a character to dinner.** Help your child plan a menu the character would like based on information from the book.



Q: School just started, and I'm already worried about my child's reading skills. Is it too soon to contact the teacher?

A: No! The sooner reading struggles are identified, the better. The teacher is still getting to know your child, so your perspective is especially important.

Working together gives your child the best chance for success. Let the teacher know about your concerns and be sure to ask what you can do to support your child at home.

Fill your refrigerator with words

Is your refrigerator plastered with photos, art and more? Cover it with words, too. Add:

- **Letter magnets** so your child can spell out words.
- **A calendar** to help your child recognize days of the week.
- **Lists**, such as shopping lists, to-do lists and weekly menus.
- **A "word of the day"** for you and your child to use and discuss.

For lower elementary readers:

- ***Turtle's Race with Beaver*** by Joseph Bruchac and James Bruchac. Turtle burrows deep into the pond when winter comes. When she resurfaces, she finds that Beaver has moved in, and the pond is different.
- ***The Noisy Paint Box*** by Barb Rosenstock. When Vasya Kandinsky got his first set of paints, he painted along to the music and sounds of the city.



For upper elementary readers:

- ***The Universe of Fair*** by Leslie Bulion. Miller wants to explore the town fair by himself. However, he finds that responsibility is much more than he bargained for.
- ***For the Love of Autumn*** by Patricia Polacco. Danielle has a kitten named Autumn. When Autumn runs away, Danielle's students work together to help her find her beloved cat.

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