

Encouraging Literacy: Tips for Parents

Children love to share their opinions! Make reading fun—and help your child develop strong reading skills—by tapping into this natural desire. Encourage your child to tell you what he/she thinks, using the questions below as a starting point.

Strong readers:

- Predict
- Analyze
- Connect
- Comprehend

PREDICTING

Strong readers can guess what might happen in a story. To help your child develop the skill of predicting:

- Before reading a book, take time to look at the cover art and think about the title. Ask your child: What do you think this book might be about? What do you think might happen?
- As you are reading, ask:
 - What do you think might happen next? Why?
 - How do you think the story will end?

ANALYZING

Strong readers put together “clues” and details to understand what is happening in a story. “Clues” do not apply only to mystery stories! A well-written story will not spell everything out for the reader, but will make the reader do a little bit of work. A simple example would be a line such as, “Sally shivered violently.” Depending on the context, the reader has to figure out: Is Sally cold? Or scared? Or something else? The skill of analysis or critical thinking is one of the things that makes reading good exercise for the brain—and one of the things that makes reading fun! Stories with writing such as “Sally shivered violently” are much more fun to read than stories with writing such as, “Sally was cold.” Examples of questions to help develop the skill of analyzing include:

- What do you think the character is feeling?
- What do you think the character is thinking?
- What do you think the author is trying to tell us?

CONNECTING

Strong readers make connections between what happens in a story and what happens in their lives. They also make connections *between* different stories and *within* a story. Examples of questions to develop the skill of connecting:

- Has anything like that ever happened to you?
- Have you ever felt that way?
- Does this book remind you of other books you have read?

COMPREHENDING

Strong readers understand and remember what they have read. This can be especially challenging for newly independent readers. At times, these readers may be so focused on deciphering the sound and meaning of each individual word—word by painstaking word!—they lose the big picture of the story. Questions to help develop the skill of comprehension include:

- What did you notice in the story?
- How did the story make you feel?
- What did you like best about the story?
- What would you have done differently if you were in the story? If you were the author?

IMPORTANT!! Be sure to choose just a couple of these questions each time you read. Make this a fun conversation—not a test!