

READING ALOUD TO YOUR CHILDREN

Reading aloud is a gift you can freely give to your children from the day they are born until the time they leave the nest. Children's reading experts agree that reading aloud offers the easiest and most effective way to help children become lifelong readers. It can also be as much fun for you as it is for your children.

A child whose day includes listening to lively stories is more likely to grow up loving books and wanting to read them. To spark this desire in your children, you may want to try some of these suggestions offered by Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), a national nonprofit organization that inspires youngsters to read.

- Set aside a special time each day to read aloud to your children. Fifteen minutes a day is an ideal time.
- Vary your selections. For very young children, look for picture books with illustrations and print that is simple, clear, and colorful.
- Read slowly and with expression. The more you ham it up, the more your children will love it. Try substituting your child's name for a character in the story.
- Have your children sit where they can see the book clearly, especially if it is a picture book.
- Allow time for your children to settle into the story, as well as time afterwards to talk about it.
- As you read aloud, encourage your children to get in on the act. Invite them to describe pictures, read bits of text, or predict what will happen next. It is even fun to dramatize the roles in the story or read lines of dialogue.
- Children like a sense of completion, so finish what you begin. If the book is lengthy, find an appropriate stopping point, such as the end of a chapter.
- Continue to read aloud to your children even after they begin school and are independent readers. There is no age limit to reading to your children.
- Teenagers may enjoy reading aloud to a younger sibling. They often like to revisit some of their old favorites.



FAMILY STORYTELLING

Since ancient times, storytelling has fired the imaginations of listeners of all ages in every corner of the world. Generation after generation, families have told stories to entertain, instill values, pass on traditions and express their hopes and dreams.

Storytelling is highly regarded as an important step toward developing children's literacy. When you tell your children stories, you are building their vocabularies, giving them a sense of how stories work and exercising their imaginations as they visualize the story.

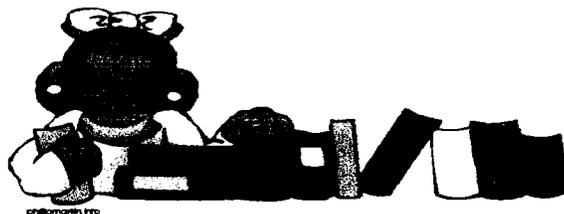
A family rich in stories has a true legacy to pass along. Here are some suggested storytelling ideas from Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), a national nonprofit organization that inspires children to read.

- Choose an appropriate story for the audience. Make sure young listeners will be able to follow the plot, and that the story can be told within the limits of their attention span.
- Read or rehearse the story until you know it well.
- Tell stories you like. If you are not enthused about a story, your voice will give away your lack of interest. Remember that enthusiasm is contagious.
- Use colorful words. Rich, descriptive language will help your children visualize the story as it unfolds.
- Change your voice. Distinguish among the different voices of your characters by changing your own voice. Speeding up and slowing down or raising and lowering your voice can dramatize story action and mood also.
- Have your children participate. They can say the magic words at your cue, chant lines that repeat, or add sound effects. If you are making the story up as you go along, ask them to contribute.
- Use props. Simple household props can liven up a story and encourage children to retell it themselves. Children can also make their own stick or paper bag puppets.
- Tell it again! Like a favorite book, a good story can be retold over and over. In time, your children may want to tell the story themselves.

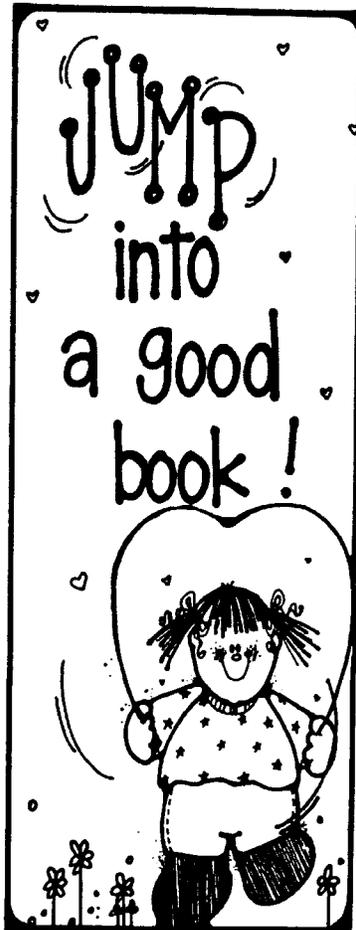
TIPS FOR SELECTING AND USING LITERATURE WITH CHILDREN

Families often ask teachers for help with book selections and about the development of reading skills. Many families are looking for a quick method to determine a book's appropriateness for their child's independent reading level. Comprehension checks and ways to enhance oral reading are also key areas of interest. May you find these suggestions useful as you discover the wonderful world of books with your family!

- **Select books that appeal to your child's interest level.**
- **Use the five-finger test to help your child select books appropriate for his/her reading level. Encourage your child to choose a book that looks interesting, open it to any page and read. Each time your child comes to an unknown word, a finger is raised. Five unknown words on a page indicate that the book is probably too difficult for independent reading. Save the book to use at a later time or include it as a read aloud selection.**
- **Read books aloud to your child on a regular basis. Don't overlook chapter books! Primary grade children enjoy them as much as intermediate grade children.**
- **Provide opportunities for shared reading. In a shared reading, you take turns reading aloud with your child.**
- **Invite your child to read a favorite book to a younger sibling or friend.**
- **Use repeated readings with your son or daughter. Allow your child to practice the story as many times as needed for the development of fluency with oral reading.**
- **Record your child reading a favorite selection. Mail the tape to a distant relative or friend. The recorded story could also become a wonderful addition to a childhood memory box.**
- **Use echo reading. Read a short passage from a favorite selection and ask your child to reread it matching your fluency and expression.**
- **Read paragraphs alternately with your child. Provide guide questions for the paragraphs read aloud. Allow your child to ask questions also.**



- Help your child summarize a story using these five questions:
 Who or what is the story about?
 When or where does the story take place?
 What happens first?
 What happens next?
 How does the story end?
- Invite your child to draw a picture illustrating a favorite scene or character from a story. Encourage your child to write a descriptive paragraph about it. Ask your child to read it to you.
- Encourage your child to create an advertisement for a favorite book.
- Invite your child to recommend three favorite books for you to enjoy!



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 Prepared by the Families and Reading Committee of the Keystone State Reading Association