

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Hough Street School  
Mrs. Lori Wilcox, Principal

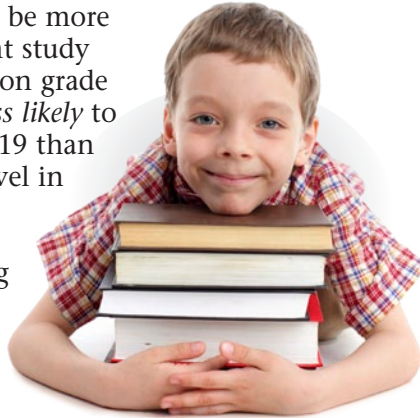
## Is your child reading on grade level?

The answer to this question might be more important than you think. A recent study found that a child who can't read on grade level by third grade is *four times less likely* to graduate from high school by age 19 than a child who is reading on grade level in third grade.

The study's author, Donald J. Hernandez, said "We teach reading for the first three grades and then after that children are not so much learning to read but using their reading skills to learn other topics. In that sense if you haven't succeeded by third grade it's more difficult to [catch up] than it would have been if you started before then."

If you already know your child is reading on grade level, great! If you don't, make an appointment to talk to your child's teacher as soon as you can. The faster you and your child's teacher team up to help your child reach grade level, the sooner you'll see results that will impact your child now and in the future.

**Source:** "Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters," The Annie E. Casey Foundation, [www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/123/2010KCSpecReport/AEC\\_report\\_color\\_highres.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/123/2010KCSpecReport/AEC_report_color_highres.pdf).



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*"A capacity and taste for reading gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others."*

—Abraham Lincoln

## Make reading a fun responsibility

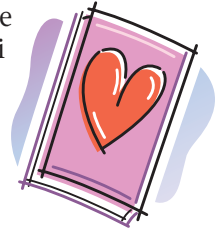
If your child resists reading, it's tempting to be pushy about it. But research shows self-motivated kids do better in school. This doesn't mean parents and teachers shouldn't motivate kids to read. They should! But it's helpful to involve kids in decisions about reading.

At the library, for example, you might say, "You can pick anything from the children's section. It can be a magazine, comic book or anything else. I can't wait to see what you choose!" (That's a lot better than, "You have to get at least one book.") Watch your child's excitement take over!

**Source:** R. Lent, "The Responsibility Breakthrough," Upper Merion Area School District, [www.umasd.org/13331062914434797/lib/13331062914434797/The\\_Responsibility\\_Breakthrough.doc](http://www.umasd.org/13331062914434797/lib/13331062914434797/The_Responsibility_Breakthrough.doc).

## Cookbooks further love of reading

Story time and snack time go together like macaroni and cheese. Check out these children's cookbooks based on favorite childhood tales:



- **Green Eggs and Ham Cookbook** by Georgeanne Brennan (Random House).
  - **Roald Dahl's Even More Revolting Recipes** by Roald Dahl (Viking).
  - **The Little House Cookbook** by Barbara M. Walker (HarperTrophy).
- Share a story and a story-inspired snack with your child!

**Source:** E. Kennedy, "Top 5 Children's Cookbooks Based on Favorite Children's Books, About.com, <http://childrensbooks.about.com/od/childrenscookbooks/tp/cbcookbooks.htm>.

## Keep reading aloud for life

Once your child can read easily, should you keep reading aloud to her? Absolutely! No child is *ever* too old to enjoy—and learn from—reading with parents. It's great practice for your child—and quality time for both of you.



## Beat boredom with novel activities



Your child is bored—but says he doesn't want to read. How can you change his mind (without his even noticing)? Try these book-based boredom

busters. Suggest that he:

- **Name a topic** for you to research. Then find cool facts he won't be able to resist reading more about!
- **Dictate a story.** While he talks, you write. Then have him read his creation aloud to the family.

## Simple questions show your interest & check comprehension

It's exciting to hear your child say, "I read the whole book!" But it's even more exciting to hear that he *understood* it. To build and check your child's comprehension:



- **Ask questions before your child reads.** Encourage him to think about what he'll encounter. "What do you think the story will be about?" "Does it remind you of anything you've read before?"
- **Keep questioning while your child reads.** This prompts him to think critically. "What happened so far?" "What do you think will happen next?" "What would you write for the ending?"
- **Talk about the book when your child is finished.** "How did it end?" "Do any characters remind you of people you know?" "What would you tell other kids about this book?" "Was there anything confusing in the story?"

Source: J. Brummitt-Yale, "Fostering Reading Comprehension and Retention," K12Reader, [www.k12reader.com/fostering-reading-comprehension-and-retention](http://www.k12reader.com/fostering-reading-comprehension-and-retention).

## Support teachers by following guidelines

When teachers encourage parents to read with students at home, what exactly do they mean? Experts say parents should:

- **Read with children every day.**  
This is easier if you develop a routine, such as always reading at bedtime.
- **Read for at least 10 minutes.**  
Just a small amount of time makes a big difference!
- **Make reading appealing.** Keep a variety of interesting materials handy. Show how much you enjoy reading, too.
- **Add reading to other activities.** Use directions for board games, for instance, or point out signs while driving.



Hemera

Source: B. Swanson, "How Can I Improve My Child's Reading?" Reading Rockets, [www.readingrockets.org/article/161](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/161).



**Q:** I hear other parents talking about "fluency." What is fluency, and how I can help my child achieve it?  
**A:** Fluency is the ability to read smoothly, easily and accurately. To improve it, read books with your child repeatedly to build familiarity with words. Your child will get used to common sound combinations. In time, familiarity becomes fluency!

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Make library trips a weekly routine

Libraries are among the most valuable resources in any community. Visit them weekly to:



- **Check out** new items—and old favorites.
- **Attend** children's activities like story hour or plays.
- **Play** educational computer games.
- **Build** your child's comfort in a place she can always learn.

## For lower elementary readers:

- ***Not Inside This House!*** by Kevin Lewis (Scholastic/Orchard). See what happens when a little boy tries to bring home a series of pets. Here's a hint: His mother isn't thrilled!
- ***Grin and Bear It*** by Leo Landry (Charlesbridge). Bear wants to be a comedian. But when he gets in front of a crowd, he freezes up! Will he ever get over his stage fright?



## For upper elementary readers:

- ***Abby Takes a Stand*** by Patricia McKissack (Scholastic). Children learn about life—and prejudice—in 1960, when the Nashville counter sit-ins took place.
- ***My Life as a Fifth-Grade Comedian*** by Elizabeth Levy (HarperCollins). Bobby's jokes get him into serious trouble. To prove himself, he must organize a school comedy contest—and come out a winner.

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