

Parents and Guardians,

The reading skills your child learns now can last a lifetime. In addition to knowing how to put letters and sounds together to make words, it is important for your child to learn other skills related to books and reading. Practice some of the following skills when you read with your child at home. (Note: Each child learns to read at his/her own pace. Your child may already know some of the following, or may be a brand new reader and need to start from the beginning.)

One of the first things a child needs to know about a book is how to hold it correctly. When you read together, make sure your child is holding the book so the letters and words are right side up. In addition, make sure he is holding the book open enough to see the pages, but not bending the cover back and breaking the spine.

Before you and your child begin to read the story, point out to your child or ask her to tell you the title of the book, the author's name, and the illustrator's name. Using the correct vocabulary from the very beginning can help your child as she advances to harder reading and research projects later in school.

Once you open the book, remind your child to read the left page first and then the right page. Also remind him to read each word and each sentence from left to right.

As you read with your child, encourage her to use the correct words for the amount of text she is reading. For instance, ask her to point out a single letter, a word, a sentence, and a paragraph. With beginning readers, you can talk about the sound each letter makes. With more advanced readers, talk about the need for a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence, and punctuation at the end of each sentence.

Once your child knows how to hold a book and can use the proper words to describe the parts of a book, you can work with him on more advanced reading skills. Ask him to predict what will happen next in the story, or ask him to make up his own story using the pictures. After you are done reading, ask him to tell you what happened in the story.

Reading is one of the most important skills your child will learn while she is in school. The time you spend reading together will not only improve her reading skills, but will offer quality one-on-one time just for the two of you.

