
***READY for SCHOOL* News: Maximizing Read Aloud Times**

Reading together can be one of the closest times between a child and a parent. A love of books is built during these times when children are snuggled up close. But many of us lament when night after night our child asks us to read the same book. We are hoping for another choice to keep it more interesting for ourselves. While reading the same book time after time can feel like drudgery, this repetition of favorite books can play an important part in children's reading readiness skills. Here are a few tips:

- Repetitive reading of the same book helps children make the connection between the spoken and written word, a crucial reading readiness skill. A child is beginning to understand that every time his Dad looks at these pages, he says the same words.
- It can be helpful to occasionally point to the words as you read, especially with books with large print and a few words on each page. Don't do this every time – it could take away from the story if done repeatedly, but occasionally this also aids with the connection between spoken and written words.
- Ask your child to retell the story to you by just looking at the pictures. This helps with making the connection between pictures and text. Early readers can use pictures to help decode words they are unsure of. Learning this skill early will aid young readers later.
- Many of us have observed our child sitting and “reading” a book independently, telling the story out loud. She may tell you she is “reading” the book when actually she has just memorized it and recalls the story from the picture clues. While this is not reading per se, the process of using pictures clues to recall text, as above, will aid in the reading process.
- With books that have repetitive phrases (such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. and illustrations by Eric Carle), pause for your child to fill in the next words, once he gets to know the text. This helps your child with the following important skills:
 - Predicting what comes next
 - Building memory skills
 - Increasing your child's self-esteem and confidence
 - Building rhyming skills which aid in decoding words later
 - Connecting the spoken word with the written word

Enjoy your read-aloud times with your child. While reading aloud by itself is one of the best ways to prepare your child to be a reader, with the occasional addition of some of the tips above, this time can even further strengthen reading readiness skills.

Resource:

Neuman, S. B.; Copple, C.; & Bredekamp, S. (2000). *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.