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Reading is What? FUNDAMENTAL!

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Reading is a critical part of language development and academic success. It is never too early to start reading to your child, so here are some tips for reading to your little one at home.

- Use the pictures in the book! Ask questions and have the child describe what he/she/they see. Even if a student is older, there is nothing wrong with using pictures in a book to help with comprehension. Remember, many college level text-books still have visual aids, so big kids use pictures too!
- Have your child recap what you have read by summarizing. If your child needs some support, flip through the pages to help his/her/their memory. You can also ask WH questions, such as, "Who was in the story? What did they do? Where did the story take place? When does the story take place?" Depending on your child's age and abilities, you can even ask tougher, inferential questions (with answers not directly stated in the text), such as, "Why did character X go to Y?" or "How do you think character X feels? Why?"
- Remember that it is easier to retain smaller chunks of information than larger ones. Instead of waiting to finish a whole book or a whole chapter before going over what you have read, try recapping with your child after a page, a paragraph, or even a couple of sentences (whatever your child can remember at a time).



- Sound effects and visual supports, such as pictures or gestures, are shown to increase a child's vocabulary comprehension (Lawson-Adams & Dickinson, 2019). So if you come across a new word in your story, such as "chop," mimic a chopping motion with your hand and make a "chop, chop, chop" noise. Have your little one join along too!



- Relate the information to something the child already knows or experiences. For example, if the book is about a shark, you can ask the child, "Do you remember when we went to the aquarium?! We saw a big shark with lots of teeth, just like this one in the book! What do you remember about that shark?"



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(cont.)

- Main idea is a challenging component of reading comprehension for many children with language and learning deficits. You can help your child recall the main idea by asking, "What is this part of the book about?" or "What is the most important idea on this page?" If your child is struggling with this, state a detail and state the main idea and ask which one is more important. Remember, using smaller chunks, such as looking for the main idea of a paragraph rather than a whole book, might be more effective for some children.
- Many younger children or children with limited attention will often move to another activity before a book is finished. Try to have the child attend to the book as long as possible. But if the child gets up and moves on to another activity, keep on reading! If the child is in earshot, they are still absorbing story elements, new vocabulary, the predictable patterns of text, etc.



The most effective strategy is to read every single day. Even though the life of a parent is very busy (understatement), just a little reading each day does wonders for language and literacy development.

Resources:

Lawson-Adams, J., & Dickinson, D.K. (2019). Sound stories: using nonverbal sound effects to support English word learning in first-grade music classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*. doi: 10.1002/rrq.280

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