

Parent/Teacher Resources

Help Your Child Choose a “Just-Right” Book and Encourage Home Reading

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Reading for pleasure will help your child become a good reader. Help your child choose books he can read and wants to read, what we call “just-right” books. This means that your child:

- Is interested in the book.
- Can read and figure out almost all the words.
- understands what he or she is reading (can tell you what the story is about or what he or she is learning).
- Can read fairly smoothly. If your child is stumbling over many words, she or he will not be able to focus on reading for understanding.

In helping your younger child select a “just-right” book, try the “five-finger rule.” As your child reads, have him or her count on one hand any unknown words. If there are five or more different unknown words on a full page, this book is too hard for your child to read alone, although you may still want to read it aloud. Have older children or children who are already good readers read at least several pages before deciding whether a book is too hard. Sometimes, a book that may initially seem too hard is “just right” once the child has read enough for meaning to “kick in.”

If your child wants to read aloud to you, that’s great. However, it is not necessary for your child to read aloud to you every night. Once students are readers, they do most of their reading silently. Talk with your child about what he is reading, but don’t quiz him or her; keep your conversations relaxed and informal.

Be a reading model for your child. If possible, try to set aside time during which the whole family reads. Also, students read more when they have their own libraries. Create a shelf for your child’s books and give books as gifts on special occasions.

Thank you for working with me in encouraging your child to become a reader.

Sincerely,
Your child’s teacher