



6. How can you tell whether a book is on your child's reading level? Some educators suggest using the "rule of thumb".

Have your child read a page of the book aloud. Have her hold up one finger for each word she does not know. If she holds up four fingers and a thumb before the end of the page, the book is probably too hard for her to read alone. But it might be a great book to read aloud.

7. Limit the amount of TV your child watches. Studies show that kids who spend more than ten hours a week watching television do worse in reading than kids whose parents set limits on TV time. Some families give their children "TV tickets," each good for 30 minutes of television time. When the tickets are gone, the set is turned off for the week. In some families, kids can redeem unused tickets for money (to buy books, of course).



8. Cooking a recipe together is an excellent way to give your child practice in reading directions. Choose a simple recipe, and be sure it's for a food your child enjoys. Have him read the directions out loud to you. Work together, step by step. Then enjoy!

9. A "reading dinner" can provide special reading time for your family. Announce the meal before hand. That night, everyone comes to the table with a book. It's one time when reading at the table is allowed. You may want to read something aloud for everyone to share. And be sure to talk about what each family member is reading. An occasional reading dinner works because it's special. It also gives kids a chance to see that reading is important for the whole family.

10. For a child who's just learning to recognize letters, play "Alphabet Concentration." On one set of 3"x5" cards, print the alphabet in capital letters. On another set, print the alphabet in lower-case letters. Now shuffle the cards, turn them over, and lay them all out. Players can make a pair by matching the capital letter with its lower-case partner. For very young children, start with a few pairs, gradually working up to the entire deck.



Dinwiddie County Public Schools

Ten Ways To Help Your Child Read Better



1. Reading is a skill, and it gets better with practice. Research shows that kids who spend as little as 30 minutes a day reading books, magazines and newspapers are more likely to become good readers. Encourage your children to spend some time reading every day.

2. Make reading easy. If your TV is within easy reach, but books are stored on a high shelf, you can probably guess how your kids will spend their free time. But if they have their own bookshelf filled with interesting books and TV time must be scheduled in advance, they'll probably pick up a book.

3. Read aloud to your children.

Research shows this is probably the most important thing you can do to encourage your children's success as readers. Here are some tips from Jim Trelease's *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, an excellent book to read before you begin:



1. Begin to read to children as soon as possible.
2. Try to set aside time every day for reading aloud. You can start with just 10 minutes a day.
3. Remember that the art of listening is an acquired one. It must be taught and cultivated gradually.
4. Vary the length and subject matter of your reading.
And here are some read-aloud don'ts, also from *The Read-Aloud Handbook*:
5. Don't read stories you don't enjoy yourself.
6. Don't be surprised if your kids interrupt with a lot of questions. Answer their questions right away.
7. Don't confuse quantity with quality. Your child will remember 10 minutes of reading together far longer than he'll remember two hours of television.
8. Don't compete with television. Trelease says that if parents ask children if they'd prefer a story or TV, kids will usually choose television. But, he says, "since you are the adult, you choose." Tell your kids the TV will be turned off at 8:30—regardless. If they want a story, fine. If they don't, that's OK, too. But don't give kids the idea that books are the reason they can't watch TV.



4. Give your children a wide range of experiences, which are the foundation for understanding what they read. Taking your children on picnics, visits to the zoo or trips to a nearby park can all provide opportunities for learning. A child who has seen and touched a sheep, for example, will learn the words sheep, wool and, of course, baa.

5. Look for unusual places for your daily reading time with your children. Here are some suggestions:

1. Outside under a shady tree; in a sandbox or a hammock; at a nearby park.
2. Toss a sheet over a clothesline or table to create a hideaway.
3. Keep a book in your glove box for long road trips, traffic delays or those times you get stuck in the bank line.
4. Spread a blanket on the floor and have an indoor reading picnic.