
A Letter to Families About Stories and Books

Dear Families,

Reading is essential for school success. It's also a wonderful source of enjoyment. Reading to children every day is one of the best ways to interest children in books, and it can be among the most treasured times you have together.

I have a large collection of books for the children, and we go to the library regularly for story time and to find more books. I encourage the children to look at books whenever they want, and we read together at least once a day. Sometimes I choose a story to read to the children. At other times, I let them pick their favorites.

Reading aloud encourages children to love books, introduces new ideas, and helps children learn how to handle problems. As children listen to me read and look at the pictures and text, their own reading skills begin to develop.

- We look at the pictures together, and I ask them questions like these: "Can you find where the caterpillar is now?" or "What is that silly dog doing?"
- I point out the pictures to infants and tell them what objects are called.
- I ask the older children, "What do you think will happen next?" or "Why do you think she's smiling?" Questions like that help them understand the story and learn about story structure.
- I let all the children help me tell the story by repeating words or phrases they remember from previous readings. Sometimes rhymes and refrains also help them predict the text as we read together.
- I encourage children to look at books, listen to recorded stories, retell stories, and scribble and write throughout the day. Sometimes children dictate stories to me.

Read and tell stories to your child every day. Reading aloud together and telling stories lets your child know how much you value these activities, and their enjoyment of books encourages them to learn to read. Here are some more things you can do with your child.

- Encourage your child to talk about the stories you read.
- Offer prompts such as "I wonder what will happen next?" or "I wonder why..."
- Try to relate the story to something in your child's life: "That dog looks just like Grandpa's."
- Let your child experiment with paper and pencils, pens, or markers.
- Take your child to the library for story time and to check out books.

Let's share information. I can tell you the titles of the books your child enjoys here, and you can tell me your child's favorite story or nursery rhyme so I can read or recite it, too. If you record your child's favorite story or nursery rhyme, I can play it during the day, especially if you speak a language at home that I don't speak.

Sincerely,

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