

# BUILDING READERS

Title I Cooperative  
Educational Service Unit 10

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

## Make reading routines part of your child's plan for back-to-school success!

Heading back to school means more than buying supplies and going to class. It involves establishing routines that help students do their best—especially when it comes to reading. What your child does *after* school can have a big impact on her success *at* school! To help your child develop good reading habits:

- **Set aside time for daily reading.** Children who read at least 20 minutes a day (in addition to their regular homework reading) are more successful in school and develop larger vocabularies.
- **Make your routine special.** Read favorite books before school at the breakfast table. Visit the library every week and fill a bag with new books to read. Do whatever it takes to keep your child excited about reading!
- **Stick to a regular bedtime reading routine.** Allow time for getting ready for bed, reading a bedtime story and saying good-night.



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*"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it."*  
—Oscar Wilde

### Textbook reading should not be rushed

Is there a wrong way to read a textbook? "Yes!" say experts. If kids simply glance at headings, dive in and close the book when they're done, they miss important details. It's better to slow down and:

- **Pre-read.** Look over material—noting headings, pictures, vocabulary words, charts and summaries.
- **Read.** Ask questions that promote thinking. For example, "Who was involved in that event?" or "Why did this happen in history?"
- **Review.** Your child can restate information in his own words, answer study questions or use a study guide.

**Source:** "Textbook Reading," Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, <http://new.ipfw.edu/offices/casa/study/index.html#textread>.

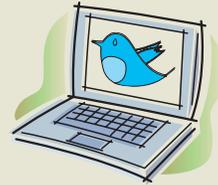
### Ask questions to build verbal skills

Every time you talk with your child about school, it's a chance to build oral language skills. The key is to ask open-ended questions that encourage detailed answers. For example, "Who did you sit with at lunch today?" "What have you been learning in science lately?" "If you could be one character from a book, who would you be?" "Which book you've read recently is your favorite?"



### Tweet tweet!

Looking for more information on how to ready your child for reading success? Now you can get access to *Building Readers* tips, online resources and book recommendations on Twitter @BuildingReaders! Not on Twitter? You can still check out the fun by visiting [www.twitter.com/BuildingReaders](http://www.twitter.com/BuildingReaders).



### Renew your commitment to monitoring your child's screen time



If you relaxed screen-time rules over the summer, it's time to get back on track. Experts recommend no more than one or two hours of screen time per day. (That includes TV, computer and video game use.) Too much screen time is linked to problems with sleep, learning and socializing. Make sure your child has books, physical activities and other fun alternatives available.

**Source:** "Children and TV: Limiting your child's screen time," Mayo Clinic, [www.mayoclinic.com/health/children-and-tv/MY00522](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/children-and-tv/MY00522).

## Use prefixes and suffixes to expand vocabulary

Learning about prefixes and suffixes helps kids understand new words in almost every subject. Remind your child that:



- **Prefixes appear at the beginning of words.** For example, the prefix *pre-* means “before.”
- **Suffixes are found at the end of words.** Words that end in *-able*, for instance, relate to “being able.”
- **Prefixes and suffixes are clues.** They help kids comprehend new words, such as “predict” and “measurable.”
- **Prefixes and suffixes are fun.** Can your child guess the meaning of “predate” or “excusable”? Can he name words with prefixes and suffixes for *you* to define?

Source: E. McDonald, “Reading Across the Curriculum,” Inspiring Teachers, [www.inspiringteachers.com/classroom\\_resources/articles/curriculum\\_and\\_instruction/reading\\_across\\_curriculum.html](http://www.inspiringteachers.com/classroom_resources/articles/curriculum_and_instruction/reading_across_curriculum.html).

## Family reading doesn't have to require books

When families think of reading, they usually think of books. But you don't need books, magazines or newspapers to read. All you need is your imaginations! Here's what to do:

- **Give each family member** a few sheets of lined paper and a pen or pencil.
- **Have each person write a story.** It can be silly or serious, fiction or nonfiction. Young children can write short stories or dictate stories to another person.
- **Save the stories** until you have time to read them aloud to each other. Then read and enjoy!



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Afterwards, brainstorm about future activities. Maybe next time you'll write movie reviews or letters to each other.



**Q:** My child's teacher wants students to “think critically” about what they read at home. What can I do to help my child think critically about what she reads?

**A:** All elementary students—even kindergartners—can practice critical thinking. After your child reads something, ask questions that help her analyze information. For example, “What happened in the story?” “Why did it have a happy ending?” “Does the book remind you of anything in real life?” “What did you learn from reading it?”

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Read, relax and get real results

Reading is fun. But your child may not believe it if he only reads at homework time. Encourage leisure reading by visiting the library or bookstore. Let your child browse and pick out books and magazines—even if they're below his reading level or written in comic-book style. Continue reading aloud to your child, too. This free-time reading will improve learning.



## For lower elementary readers:

- ***A Friend for Einstein, the Smallest Stallion*** by Charlie Cantrell (Hyperion). Einstein is a *miniature* miniature horse—and is too small to romp around with regular-sized horses. Who will become his friend?
- ***The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps*** by Jeanette Winter (Schwartz & Wade). Young animal lovers will enjoy this fascinating biography of scientist Jane Goodall.



## For upper elementary readers:

- ***Basher: Rocks & Minerals: A Gem of a Book*** by Dan Green (Kingfisher). Science fans will enjoy this creative look at rocks and minerals, complete with a glossary and index.
- ***Powerless*** by Michael Cody (Yearling). Twelve-year-old Daniel moves to a new town—and there's something unusual about his new friends.

### Building Readers®

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