



THE READING HOUSE



Engaging Strategies

Reading together with your child provides many “teachable moments.” In addition to just reading the story aloud, take a few moments to engage your learner in the story by interacting with the text to decode it.

Supplies: Storybook

Preparation: None

There are strategies for decoding that need to become second nature in order for readers to become more independent. The best way to teach these methods, is for parents and teachers to model or talk about using the strategies while actively reading together. Try not to overwhelm your learners with too many at once. You will find that the text of the story will often lend itself to teaching specific strategies. Over time, your youngster will learn how to use them interchangeably throughout a story.

- Prediction. Prior to turning a page ask, “What do you think is going to happen next?” This sets their brain in gear as to what the text on the next page may be.
- Logic. Sometimes, children read a word incorrectly but continue on anyway. Stop them and ask, “Did that make sense to you?” Ask a few additional questions about the meaning of the text in order to lead them to the correct word.
- Read it again. Good readers often re-read passages to solidify their understanding. This is an excellent habit to encourage. Pick a few passages when reading with your child and say, “Let’s read that again to make sure we understand.”
- Look for the smaller words. There will frequently be a smaller word within a longer one, of which your reader may already know. For example, “end” within *friend*, “ate” within *plate*, “far” within *farther*, etc. If your reader gets stuck on such a word, point out the part of the word he *does* know. Then assist her with blending the additional letters with it.
- Word families. Identifying and reading word families is a phonetic skill that all children should learn separately. Remind your reader of word families she has previously learned if it will help her decode an unfamiliar word. For example, the *-ill* family would assist your learner in decoding *spill*, *drill*, or *shrill*.
- Covering common word endings. Use your finger to cover common word endings such as *-ing*, *-ed*, *-ly* and *-tion*. This will focus your child on first decoding the root word, after which she can then blend the ending.
- Finger Pointing. Very young readers should be encouraged to point their fingers to the words they are reading. As they become more fluent, they can use a bookmark to

underline a line of text. They will discard this hands-on manipulative when it starts slowing their reading down.



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- Online dictionary. The Internet has many wonderful dictionaries from which your learner can both hear the pronunciation and see the definition of the word.
- Skimming. Explain to your learner that *skimming* is when you quickly read a few words or sentences (but not the whole page) in order to get a sense of what the story is about. Practice reading the first sentence of each paragraph (for a longer book) and encourage your reader to try and predict what elements may occur in the story. Stress that you do not expect them to get this exactly right.
- Ask a grown-up. When all strategies fail, always assure your learner that she can come to you for help!