

Tips for Helping Your Child Learn to Read



These tips are taken from the pamphlet “Helping Your Child Learn to Read – A Parent’s Guide” produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Additional information can be found on the ministry’s website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

How Will My Child Learn to Read?

Learning to Read does not happen all at once. It involves a series of stages that lead, over time, to independent reading and to fluency.

The best time for children to start learning to read is when they are very young, usually at the preschool level. This is when they are best able to start developing basic reading skills. This begins by having people read to them on a regular basis.

READ TO YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY! It will become a treasured activity for you and your child.

Tip #1 Talk to your child – oral language is the foundation for reading.

- ✓ Tell stories
- ✓ Ask your child lots of questions
- ✓ Ask your child to tell you about his or her day
- ✓ Sing songs
- ✓ Play rhyming and riddle games

Tip #2 Make reading fun.

- ✓ Read to your child with drama and excitement
- ✓ Re-read your child’s favourite stories
- ✓ Read stories that have repetitive parts and encourage your child to join in.
- ✓ Point to words as you read them.
- ✓ Read all kinds of material – stories, poems, information books, magazines, etc.
- ✓ Encourage friends and relatives to give your child books as gifts.

Tip #3 Read every day

- ✓ Start reading to your child when he or she is very young.
- ✓ Set aside a special time each day for reading with your child.
- ✓ Choose a comfortable spot to read.
- ✓ Choose a variety of books.
- ✓ Vary the length of reading time according to your child’s age and interests.
- ✓ Praise your child for his or her ideas and participation.

Tip #4 Set an example – as your child’s role model seeing you read for pleasure will show that reading is a worthwhile activity.

Tip #5 Talk about books – discussing a story or book with your child helps your child understand it and connect it to his or her own experience of life. It also helps to enrich your child’s vocabulary.

- ✓ Ask your child about the kind of books he or she would like to read.
- ✓ Talk to your child about your favourite books from childhood and offer to read them.
- ✓ Encourage your child to ask questions and to comment on the story and pictures in a book – before, during and after reading it.
- ✓ Look at the cover and the title of the book with your child, and ask your child what he or she thinks might happen in the story.
- ✓ Encourage your child to think critically about the story.
- ✓ Think out loud about the story as you read and encourage your child to do the same.
- ✓ Give your child time to think about the story, and then ask him or her about it again in a few days.

Tip #6 Listen to you child read.

- ✓ Ask your child questions about what they are reading.
- ✓ Give your child time to figure out tricky words.
- ✓ Try to have your child read aloud to you when there will be no interruptions.
- ✓ Make sure your child selects books that aren’t too difficult.
- ✓ Take turns reading with your child.
- ✓ Talk about the story after your child has read it.

Tip #7 Show that you value your child’s efforts

- ✓ Be patient and flexible in your efforts to help your child.
- ✓ Show your child that you see him or her as a growing reader, and praise his or her efforts to learn.

