

Reading Strategies for All Readers



The following handout explains what independent reading strategies our children at KM are learning about. Use this information if you are looking for ways to reinforce their learning at home.

- When reading with your child, you can focus your reading on one of these aspects. Your child should be able to tell you exactly what goal and strategy he/she is working on: "I am working on my accuracy" and his /her strategy: "I am looking for small words inside big words to help me read new words".
- Research shows that when students know exactly what they need to work on, and why, they are much more successful in meeting their goals! You can do this at home too! ☺ This is divided into 4 categories: Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expand Vocabulary.

Comprehension- "I understand what I read."

- **Check for Understanding:** We have learned that it is very important to not only do our best reading, but to also do our best thinking! We know it is necessary to stop often during reading to make sure we have understood what we are reading. Practice this at home by stopping every so often during the story. Your child should be able to give a quick summary of what they just read. Who was the story about? What has happened so far? Go ahead and use the words, "Let's check for understanding," with your child. They know just what it means! ☺
- **Back up and Reread:** Have you ever read a page or two of a book and suddenly realized that you don't have a clue what you just read? What do you probably do? You back up and reread it! This is a skill that children need to be taught over and over. This strategy is important for children to try when they have not understood something they just read. By backing up and reading a section or page over, they will hopefully take their time and focus in more which will lead to a clearer understanding!
- **Name the setting:** The setting is where the story is occurring and when it is happening.
- **Know the title, author and illustrator:** Your child should know how to recognize the title, author and illustrator (if there is one) in every book that they read.
- **Retell the story:** Tell what happened at the beginning, middle and end of the story.
- **Making connections:** We discussed 3 different connections that the student can make while reading.
 - **Text to Self:** The student tells how he/she has something in common with the characters or the story.
 - **Text to World:** The student makes a connection with the knowledge that he has with something in the book.
 - **Text to Text:** The student makes a connection between two books (same characters, setting, etc.)
- **Identify Fiction or Non-Fiction:** The student can tell if it is real facts (non-fiction) or a made up story (fiction).

- Make predictions: Your child is practicing stopping in the story and thinking about what might happen next. It should make sense with what is happening in the story but doesn't have to be correct.
- Know author's purpose: Your student can determine what the author's purpose was in writing the book (to inform, to entertain, etc.).
- Use text features: This is most important in non fiction text. The student can use titles, headings, captions, and graphics to understand more about what is happening in the book.
- Ask questions throughout reading: Your child is working on thinking and asking why while reading. They are realizing that good readers continue to ask questions throughout the reading process.

Accuracy- "I can read the words."

- Cross-Checking: Your child has been learning to stop when they have just read a sentence that doesn't make sense or if they get to a word that they just don't know. After they find that tricky word, they ask themselves some questions: "Does the word I'm saying (or thinking it could be) match up with the letters or picture I see on the page?" "Does it sound right?" "Does it make sense?"
- Tap the word: This is a strategy that we emphasize in Foundations (our phonics program) and use to read and spell words. Your child should be able to use their fingers to tap out each sound (it is a tactile way to sound out words).
- Say it fast: Your child is working on reading the words after tapping the word. Your child should get their mouth ready to say the sounds, say and tap each sound, and then say the sounds fast to say the word.
- Know letters and sounds: We have to know the sounds of the words to read and the letter names to spell.
- Flip the sound- This is a strategy that the students use as they begin to encounter words with long vowels. We have discussed short vowels so it is natural for them to read the words with a short vowel sound. If that way does not make sense in the story we say, "Flip the Sound." They then say the long vowel sound (it always says its name). Example: If the word "cake" is in the story, your child may say "cak". That does not make sense. So then, they should say the long vowel sound and say "cake". That word should make sense with the pictures or rest of the sentence.
- Find Chunks in words: This means that the student is finding smaller words or parts in the larger word.
- Know trick words or sight words: Your child is practicing reading our trick words in stories. Your child should be able to recognize these words automatically while reading.
- Play with rhyming words: Students can see a word like "cat" and know the words, "mat, hat, bat, etc.
- Identify compound words: Students notice that there are smaller words in larger words. For example, cupcake is a compound word that students can read if they break the word into its two words.
- Skip the word and come back: The student can skip the word and then come back after reading the rest of the sentence. It might give context to what the word is and how to say it.

Fluency- "I can read smoothly, with expression."

- **Choose Good Fit Books:** This is a BIG one for children! We have learned that it is SO important to spend time reading books that are good fit books for each of us (we used shoes to see how different people need different size shoes). It is very important for your child to be able to read books that they can read independently with very few to NO errors. We use the 3 finger rule- if they can't read more than 3 words on a page then the book is too hard right now. This will help them become smooth (fluent) readers. I meet with each child often so that they can show me the just-right books in their book tote. After your child reads a book to you at home, ask them to share how they felt about the book. Did the book feel too easy, too hard, or just right? Why?
- **Read and read it again:** Your child is learning that when you are reading sometimes you need to read it multiple times to read it the correct way. We have talked about how it sounds to read so that people enjoy listening to it and not like a robot.
- **Read and talk like the characters:** This means that your child is working on expression and making the book come to life. Add emphasis on different characters and what they are saying. If there is something exciting going on in the story, make it sound exciting and how the characters really would sound.
- **Read to the end of the sentence:** It always sounds good to read a book and not read choppy or word by word. As adults, we know that a sentence means to pause in reading. That is how we want our students to read. So, your child is working on reading the entire sentence without stopping. It may take a few times to get it right, but that is what practice is for. ☺ Make it like a game and see how many sentences they can read without stopping in the middle of the sentence.

Expand Vocabulary- I know, find, and use interesting words."

- **Tune into Interesting Words:** We are excited to learn new words and figure out what words mean. When this happens at school, the word is explained and then added to a classroom Word Collector or wall. We refer back to the words often as this will deepen their understanding of them and expand their vocabularies. Perhaps you could keep a notebook at home to jot down interesting words that you and your child come across when reading.
- **Voracious Reading:** This is a strategy that we used to get excited about reading and finding new words while we read. Reading takes practice and is something we must do a lot to be able to read our best. We want to read as much as we can to get better in reading!
- **Ask for help defining the word:** Student can ask another person (adult or other student) if they come across a word they do not know. The student records the word and page number on a new words chart and then can ask when reading time is over (if it is silent reading time).
- **Use a tool- dictionary, thesaurus, or glossary:** The student can use a dictionary as a tool when they don't know a word while reading.
- **Use other words to help (context) and prior knowledge:** Students can use words within the rest of the sentence or paragraph to know what a word means.

Reading Tips for Home

Learning to read is a very complex task. Each child learns at his/her own pace, but there are many things that parents and caregivers can do to help them become literate. Here are some ideas for you to use as you work with your child. I hope that you find them useful.

1. Echo & Choral Reading

Echo Reading:

This is a great way to help a child develop confidence and fluency. Read aloud a line of text. Ask the child to read the same line. Continue taking turns reading and rereading the same lines. When the child begins to read with more expression and fluency, suggest that he read aloud on his own.

Choral Reading:

This strategy helps children become more fluent and confident readers. Hold the book together and ask the child to read along with you. Begin reading in a voice that is slightly louder and faster than the child's. As the child becomes more comfortable with reading the text, lower your voice and slow down your reading speed. If the child slows down, increase your volume and speed again.

Paired Reading

1. Sit side-by-side with your child and position the book in between the two of you.
2. If your child has chosen a book that they have previously been reading, ask them to retell what they remember.
3. Begin by reading out loud together. Have your child point to each word with their finger as you both read.
4. Adjust your intonation and rate to your child's level. Read with an expressive voice that is slightly faster than your child would read independently.
5. If they make an error (or hesitate for a few seconds on a word), wait to see if they correct it. If they don't, pronounce the word and have them repeat it. Then continue reading. Discuss their errors at the end of your reading time.
6. Decide upon a silent signal that you will use with your child (e.g., a gentle elbow nudge, or finger tap on the table) so they can tell you they would like to read independently. When they give you this signal, you will stop reading out-loud or read in a whisper that "shadows" your child's reading.
7. When they make a mistake or encounter difficulty, begin reading out-loud again with your child until they let you know they want to be independent by using the silent signal.
8. Do this for about 10-20 minutes each day.

Books on Tape or CD

If you don't have the time to pair read at home, try recorded reading. Give your child a book or other reading material on audiotape or CD and let them listen on their own while reading a print version of the text. Local public libraries are an excellent source for finding books on tape or CD. This approach has been widely used in schools due to the high volume of research that indicates it to be a strong strategy for children who struggle with fluency skills. If your child listens to a story, the book should be at a slightly higher level of difficulty for the child.

Teachers often refer to this as a child's "instructional reading level." Listening to a story at their instructional level will allow them to read higher level vocabulary with the right amount of support that they will need to feel confident. While your child listens to a story they should also be pointing to the words and following along with their eyes, while also reading out-loud in a whisper voice with the CD or tape. Seeing, hearing, touching, and saying the words simultaneously will benefit your child as they progress in their development as a reader.

TV Captions

Since captioned television presents a printed text read by an expert reader, it can also be an excellent way to help support your child's reading skills. Studies have shown that people have difficulty keeping their eyes off the text when watching captioned television. This is a simple thing you can do at home to encourage your child to read and practice fluency!

Repeated Reading for Fluency

1. Use this strategy for about 15 to 30 minutes.
2. Tell your child to pick a "good-fit" book, or a book at their independent reading level.
3. Have your child read out-loud for one minute.
4. After they read, have them write down the number of words they read.
5. Have them read the same exact passage again. Again, time them for one minute and have them count the number of words they read.
6. Have them repeat this process for about 15-30 minutes.
7. Have them see if the number of words they read correctly improves the more they practice the passage.

The Neurological Impress Method

This has been extremely successful with many students who have reading difficulties and it is easy to do! Do this with your child during the time they read for their reading log.

- a. Seat your child slightly in front of you, so you can point to the words they are reading and read directly into their left ear. Have your child choose a book that they can read independently, with at least 85 to 95 percent of the words read correctly the first time.
- b. Tell your child to read out-loud with you as you point to the words. Then begin to read at a slightly slower-than-normal rate for you (*this will seem very fast for your child*).. While you read be sure to point to the words as you read them (*this part is very important*). They may complain, at first, that they can not keep up with you. This should not prevent you from using this method. Explain that they are learning to become a better reader and may soon be able to keep up with you.
- c. Researchers suggest doing this for about 10-15 minutes about 2-4 times a day. A session should not last longer than 15 minutes.
- d. Continue reading out loud with your child, pointing to the words you are reading. If your child begins to read faster and is able to keep up with you, adjust your rate to be a bit faster than your child.

What should I do if my child says a word that is incorrect while reading?

Because of the way reading used to be taught, many parents feel that the only way to figure out unknown words is to "sound them out." Research has proven that this can be one of the least effective ways to figure out a word. Too many words can not be sounded out (examples: *said, know, right, etc.*). When we read, we should use three sources of information to decode the text: **meaning, structure, and visual cues**. We gather *meaning* by thinking what the story is about, looking at the pictures, and knowing that what we have read makes sense. We use *structure* cues to determine if what we have read sounds right in the sentence. We use *visual* cues to know if what we have read looks right. It is important for any reader to know how to use all of these sources of information or cues. Fluent readers do this without thinking, but children should be taught and prompted to use these strategies.

When your child makes an error within a sentence, do not interrupt. Let him/her read to the end, because the child will often go back and self-correct the errors. If not, you can help them by saying...

- a. "You said_____. Does that sound right?"
- b. "You said_____. Does that make sense?"
- c. "You said_____. Does that look right?"
- d. "If this word were_____what letter would you see at the beginning?"

After your child self-corrects an error, have them go back and reread the sentence or phrase. If your child stops within a sentence and does not know how to "attack" a word, ask them to think about the story, check the picture, and then get their mouth ready to say the word by checking the beginning sound or sounds of that word. Then they should go back and start at the beginning of the sentence (to gather meaning) and reread the sentence.

Encourage your child to look for small words or "word chunks" within the words to decode it. For example: The word *or* helps with *more*, *like* helps with *bike*, *day* helps with *today*, etc.

Our goal is for children to monitor their own reading. If the parent or teacher always supplies the word or corrects them immediately, they will not learn to monitor on their own. It is very important to encourage your child each time you see that they use a strategy that helps them monitor their own reading. You might say...

"I liked the way you..."

- tried to figure that word out
- used the picture to help you figure that word out
- noticed that something wasn't right
- tried a word that made sense
- checked the beginning (middle or ending) letter of that word
- looked for word chunks you already knew in that word
- reread the sentence when it didn't make sense
- thought about the story

My Child is always looking at the pictures and doesn't seem to be really reading. Should I cover the pictures?

Experts have learned that good readers check the pictures for clues to the story. That is why we encourage your child to use the pictures for help. Being flexible in gathering information is just another tool to help a child be successful in reading. Covering the pictures would make his search for the correct word or phrase more difficult.

Why does the teacher encourage my child to point to the words in the book?

Pointing is one of the first strategies a beginning reader can use to check his reading. Teachers sometimes use words like "Self-Monitoring" to refer to this technique. This simply means that pointing helps to remind your child to really look at the words. Some children do not realize that words convey a message. Pointing helps the child to focus and to notice the details of our written language, for instance, where one word ends and another begins. As your child develops his reading skills and grows in confidence, you will see them pointing less frequently. Your child will be able to "point with their eyes." Eventually, their eyes will move quickly across the lines of print. Pointing is just another tool to help your child read.