

A Guide to Reading Aloud

Reading with a child is an essential activity to help develop their reading skills. Reading a book aloud, taking turns reading, acting out a book, and discussing a book are all essential parts to the process. Reading together starts children on the right path to grow the reading roots and become skilled, engaged, and hopefully lifelong independent readers.

The single most important activity for building the knowledge for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. The benefits are the greatest when the child is an active participant, engaging in discussions about stories, and talking about meanings of words.

-Becoming a Nation of Readers, National Institute of Education

Why it's worth your time

Read alouds allow children exposure to text that is above their independent reading level. They may not be able to read the text on their own, but when we read the text aloud to our kids, they are able to engage at a higher level, without having to constantly decode text and read difficult words.

-The Read Aloud Handbook, Jim Trelease

Reading aloud is rewarding for both volunteers and their listeners and its benefits include:

- Activating young imaginations and fostering curiosity and thinking skills
- Introducing children to new ideas
- Growing a wide and varied vocabulary
- Providing children background knowledge and understanding about how their world works
- Building attention spans and listening comprehension
- Inspiring children to read and become lifelong readers for pleasure.



Reading aloud and talking about what you're reading sharpens children's brains. It helps them to concentrate at length, to solve problems logically, and to express themselves more easily and clearly.

The stories they hear also provide them with witty phrases, new sentences, and words of subtle meaning.

Before we read

- Give the child/group of children **plenty of choice** in books before you choose one.
- Select stories or texts that **relate to the children's** interests and experiences and are developmentally appropriate.
- For very young children or emergent readers, choose **high quality picture books** with striking pictures, a strong story line, engaging characters. Humorous and predictable books are usually the most popular.
- For older pupils read **chapter books** (with rich vocabulary) that the children **may not be able to read independently, but can comprehend**
- **Position** yourself up where you and the child are comfortable.

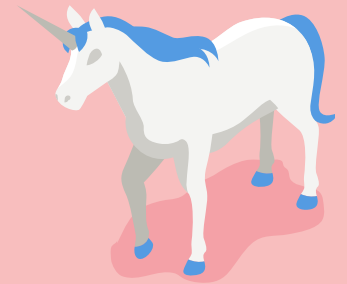


- Set aside a few moments to **settle down** so the child can attune their feet and minds to the story.
- The first time you read a book, **discuss the cover illustration**. What do you think this book is going to be about?



While we read

- **Read with expression**—don't be afraid to use silly voices for characters! Very few adults are natural readers to begin with, but you quickly get into it with practice.
- One of the most common pitfalls is reading too fast. **Read slowly** enough for the child to build mental pictures as you read.
- If the chapters are long or if you don't have enough time each day to finish an entire chapter, **pick a gripping part at which to stop**. Leave the whippersnappers hanging!!!
- **Encourage prediction:** Ask the child what they think will happen next. Help them confirm or revise these predictions as the story unfolds.
- **Ask questions!!!**
 - What do you think will happen next?
 - What are you thinking about the story right now?
 - This story reminds me of... what does it remind you of?
 - What picture do you see in your mind right now?
 - What picture does this story make you wonder about?
- **Model thinking aloud.**



After we read

- **Explain words** that listener may not be familiar with.
- **Express opinions** about the characters, plot, setting, etc.
- **Talk about** the characters' feelings.
 - Did you like that book? Why or why not? (Express your opinion too!)
 - What was your favourite part?
 - What would you give that book out of 10?
 - Which characters did you like/dislike? Why?
 - Would you have acted differently than the characters?

