

Early Childhood Connections
Cambridge Public Schools
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ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD AT HOME

Reading to children helps them learn to read. When you read to your child you encourage reading as an enjoyable experience. It is important for children to see their parents, grandparents, older sisters or brothers, relatives and friends enjoying reading. This encourages children to want to read too.

Research shows that children who read to - or with - someone at home make more progress in reading than those who do not share reading at home.

Here Are Some Guidelines For Reading Together With Your Child:

- Try to pick a time to read when both you and the child are relaxed (bedtime is often a good time to read).
- Do not try to read to the child when a favorite TV program is on (there is no point trying to compete with the TV). Hold the child close to you (on your lap or next to you). Be comfortable and affectionate.
- Let your child lead the way. You can let your child read to you. Or, you can look at books together and talk about the pictures and the story.
- If you read, let the child "read" along even if she or he cannot really read the words. Your child may remember the story and want to share what she or he knows about it.
- Give the child time to predict some words if she or he seems willing to do so. As you read together, encourage your child to read for meaning. Children sometimes use different words than those in the book as they "read" the story.
- Talk about the story and the pictures as you read. Ask questions or answer your child's questions. Talk about how books are held, how pages are turned, and what the words say.
- Let your child know you think he or she is learning a lot. Express satisfaction with his or her progress. Enjoy!

More About Reading With Children At Home

READ IT OVER AGAIN? Your child will want to hear the same story over and over again. It is only after a book has been shared many times that children's understandings develop.

WHAT ABOUT READING IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE? For families that speak another language at home, it is important to read in that language too. Children will continue to learn English in school.

IS IT OKAY TO POINT TO THE WORDS? YES! When you point to the words as you read, you are making the connection between what you are saying and the words in the book. After much practice, your child may want to point to the words as you say them.

DID YOU KNOW? When children play at reading alone, they are showing themselves how much they understand about the story and how much they know about written words.

SHOULD THE BOOK BE SHORT OR LONG? EASY OR DIFFICULT? It's fine to read any books that hold your child's attention. Most of the books used in the LITERACY CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS program feature "predictable print." That means we use stories in which there is repetition, rhyme, or patterns which capture children's attention and make the books meaningful to them. If you want to discuss book selection with staff from LITERACY CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS please call us (349-6484, 6485). We welcome your questions.