

Supporting Children’s Reading at Home:

PRACTICE READING FOR UNDERSTANDING

The strategies and supporting activities described below are taken primarily from [Supporting Your Child’s Reading at Home](#), a resource developed by [REL Southeast](#) and informed by the [What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\) Practice Guide](#) titled [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#). This resource is part of a series of instructional briefs designed to help families, afterschool providers, and other caregivers support their children’s early reading instruction while learning at home or in a hybrid learning environment.

Support children in reading accurately, at a conversational pace, and with expression so they understand what they read.

Alignment to 4 of the 10 Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy¹



- Deliberate, research-informed efforts to foster literacy motivation and engagement within and across lessons (Essential #1)

- Read-alouds of age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital (Essential #2)
- Abundant reading material and reading opportunities in the classroom (Essential #8)
- Collaboration with families in promoting literacy (Essential #10)

1 Practice accurate and efficient word identification.



When children read words accurately, it helps them understand what they are reading. As children practice reading, they read words more efficiently by increasing accuracy and rate. When children can read words correctly and fairly quickly, they can focus their attention on understanding what they are reading instead of trying to identify each word.

- **Read out loud** to children every day! Reading aloud helps children understand how reading should sound. You can model how to read words accurately and with expression. Reading with the right expression means that you are talking like the characters in the book—your voice sounds excited when the character is excited or sad when the character is sad.
- **Encourage** and help children as they read out loud. When the child comes to a word that is difficult to read, you might provide a reminder by saying, “Let’s say each sound in this word and then put the sounds together to read it.” Any reminder that encourages the child to use what he or she already knows to figure out the word can be helpful.
- **Choose** books to read out loud that are of interest to the child, are not too easy or hard, and are linked to the child’s experiences or concerns. For example, if a child is interested in cars or is afraid of the dark, it can be helpful to select books on those topics.

Prompting students to apply word-reading strategies

For less advanced readers:

1. **“Look for parts you know.”**
Point out known letter sounds, sound-spelling patterns, or rhyme patterns if the student does not recognize any.
2. **“Sound it out.”**
If the student has difficulty, prompt the student to point to each letter and say the sound one by one until the end of the word, and then say all of the sounds together continuously.
3. **“Check it! Does it make sense?”**
Prompt the reader to reread the sentence.

For more advanced readers:

1. **“You know this word part. Say this part.”**
Point to familiar prefixes or suffixes (e.g., -ing) or the first syllable of the word. Repeat for additional parts or syllables as needed.
2. **“Now read the whole word.”**

Source: Example 4.2 (page 34) from WWC practice guide titled [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade](#).

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2 Recognize misread words and correct errors. ?

Experienced readers know when they have misread a word and reading does not make sense.

Beginning readers do not always notice when they read a word incorrectly. So, it is important to show children how to recognize misread words and self-correct. The ability to self-monitor and self-correct helps children understand what they read and become better readers.

- As you read to a child, **model** how to recognize when words are misread by “thinking out loud.” You can say things like, “*That didn't make sense. I'm going to read that sentence again.*”
- When a child reads to you and misreads a word, **ask** the child to stop and see if the child can identify and correct the error. If not, **reread** the sentence with the missed word exactly as the child read it and ask, “*Did that make sense?*” If the child does not self-correct, read the word and have the child repeat and reread the sentence again.

3 Incorporate oral reading practice.



Oral reading practice means reading out loud. As children read out loud, they get better at reading words correctly, quickly, and with the right expression (fluently). When children read fluently, they can focus their attention on understanding what they read rather than trying to figure out how to read the words. The more children practice reading out loud with support, the better readers they will become!

- Practice **echo reading**. To do this, read part of a book out loud and then have the child read the same part out loud. Thus, the child echoes what you read. Model and provide feedback on proper tone, pausing, and which words to emphasize.
- Practice **taking turns** reading. Take turns reading continuous passages of a book
- Practice **reading together**. Reading together means reading the same part out loud at the same time. Let the child set the reading pace.
- As you echo-read or read together, make sure that the child follows along by having him or her **point** to each word.

Echo Reading

Read the same passage of a book and then have the child read the same passage aloud.

Passage A

Adult

Child

Take Turns

Take turns reading continuous passages of a book.

Passage A
Adult _____

Passage B
Child _____

Passage C
Adult _____

Reading Together

Read the same passage of a book aloud at the same time.

Passage A

Adult

Child

Source: Example on page 6 from *Tips for Supporting Reading Skills at Home*, Institute of Education Sciences.

Videos



Printables



Accurate and Efficient Word Identification

- An older brother reads [Bear Snores On](#) and models reading at a conversational pace and with expression.

- [When I Read to You, When You Read to Me](#) (180 KB) – Use the tips on one side of this bookmark as you read out loud to the child and the tips on the other side as the child reads out loud to you.

Recognizing Misread Words and Correcting Errors

- Mom demonstrates recognizing and fixing words as she and her son read [Time for a Bath](#).

- [Does That Make Sense?](#) (232 KB) – Use this bookmark to help children pay attention to what they read and self-correct when a word is misread.

Oral Reading Practice

- Mom reads [Little Blue Truck](#) and models how to echo read with her son.
- Mom reads [Danny and the Dinosaur and the New Puppy](#) and models reading with expression.

- [Practice Reading Out Loud](#) (386 KB) – Use this bookmark as a reminder of the importance of reading every day with children. One side of the bookmark describes **echo reading**, and the other side describes **reading together**.

Mirrors and Windows (and Sliding Glass Doors): Engaging Students through Multicultural Books²

As you practice reading and sharing books with children, it is important for children to see themselves in text (mirrors); it is also important for children to see a diverse representation of other people in texts (windows). Incorporating books that serve as both “mirrors” and “windows” can increase engagement in and excitement about reading. Below are examples of multicultural books to explore with your child, along with links to other related resources.

Title	Description	Suggested Grade
Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry	When mommy is away, it's up to daddy to do his daughter's hair in this ode to self-confidence and the love between fathers and daughters.	PK-1
The King of Kindergarten by Barnes, Derrick	A confident little boy takes pride in his first day of kindergarten.	PK-1
Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration by Samara Cole Doyon	Told by a succession of exuberant young narrators, <i>Magnificent Homespun Brown</i> is a story about feeling at home in one's own beloved skin.	2–3
Stella Diaz has Something to Say by Angela Dominguez	Third grader Stella is very, very quiet in both Spanish and English. She feels separate, just like the word “alien” that describes her green card status being born in Mexico and moving to Chicago as a baby. A fish research project for school helps Stella find her voice and overcome her fears.	2–3

- **Michigan Association for Media in Education:** [MAME MISelf in Books 2020 List](#)
- **Detroit Public Library:** [DPL 2020 African American Book List](#)
- **Colours of Us:** [500+ Multicultural Children's Books by Age and Ethnicity](#)
- **Imagination Soup:** [OwnVoices Books for Kids](#)
- **Coretta Scott King Book Award:** [Recipients](#) and [Educational Resources](#)

1 The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) Suite of Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy documents can be found at literacyessentials.org.

2 Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom, 6(3).