

## What you can do while reading a story with your child

Besides being able to read printed words, reading fluency involves *comprehending* what is being read. Children benefit from comprehension activities such as talking about what they have read, discussing the meanings of new words, and comparing one story with another. Here are some things to try at home:

- Talk about different parts of the book such as the front, back, title page, first page, dedication page and last page.
- When reading to your child, stop and have your child point out word wall words.
- Take your time reading. Do not rush. For more difficult books, don't let your child get frustrated. Alternate between you reading a page and your child reading a page.
- When reading a book with your child, you can let him/her hold the book and turn the pages.
- Have your child point to the words as they are read (pencils, chopsticks, etc. are great pointers). Help your child see that there are spaces between words, that you read from the top of the page to the bottom, and that you read from left to right.
- Point to the pictures and talk about them. Take a "picture walk" before you start reading. This means you look at the pictures, not the words. Then go back and read.
- Talk about specific letters and words in the story.
- Read expressively: talk the way the story's characters would talk; make sound effects and funny faces; vary the pitch of your voice throughout the story to make it more interesting. Make a connection between the punctuation (? ! .) and how you choose to read each sentence.
- Encourage your child to ask questions about the story's characters and events. Make predictions- "what do you think will happen next?" "How do you think the problem will be solved?"
- Talk about the story and relate it to their personal experiences. Help your child make CONNECTIONS to his/her own life or another story! What does the book remind you of? "This reminds me of when..."
- Summarize what happened in this story in your own words. First...next...last.
- Read the book more than once—you might discover something new the second or third time reading!

## How to help your child read unfamiliar words

**Reading Strategies:** use these same strategies at home, consistent with what your child hears from us at school!

- Get your mouth ready (say first sound) and STRETCH words out, practicing the letter-sound relationships- "b—a—t → BAT"
- Look for CHUNKS in words (sh, th, ou, ch, etc.). Look for smaller words in bigger words (to-day, go-ing)
- Use the picture to help you figure out the word.
- What makes sense?
- Skip the word and use the other words as clues
- Flip the vowel sound (make the long A sound instead of short A sound)

## Sights Words:

Children must learn to identify words quickly and effortlessly, so that they can focus on the *meaning/comprehension* of what they are reading. This is why we focus on **sight words** or **word wall words** in the classroom. We want students to immediately recognize our word wall words so that less time is spent on trying to sound them out. When less time is spent trying to sound out words that often cannot be sounded out (such as "the", "my", etc.), comprehension will be better. Continue to practice monthly word wall words at home!

***Sometimes just READ to have fun—don't ALWAYS feel the need to stop unless your child prompts you—reading should be FUN!***

