

On-Line Resources for Parents: Literacy

The following examples of resources to improve literacy have been selected by the DePaul University Center for Urban Education for the Chicago Public Schools Parent Community Partnership Program.

These links include reading guides, activities, learning games and interactive reading resource websites featuring non-fiction, fiction, poetry and Spanish language texts. Some have been designed specifically for parents.

Sources include nationally recognized organizations such as the National Education Association, the International Reading Association, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, National Council of Teachers of English, and the US Department of Education.

Examples of on-line literacy resources from the National Education Association

A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Learn to Read

This guide was prepared by the National Education Association (NEA).

http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/44013_NEA_W_L2.pdf

Every parent wants his or her child to be a successful reader. Reading, after all, provides the foundation for a great education as well as a lifelong skill that brings not only knowledge, but pleasure.

Building on What We Know About Learning To Read

Research on reading and learning to read shows that there are things that can be done at home from an early age that help children become successful as readers. The following suggestions, which are backed up by research, should be especially helpful to parents and caregivers of young children.

- Teaching young children to recognize the letters of the alphabet is a big boost to reading readiness. Recognizing alphabet letters is one of the single strongest predictors of reading success for young children entering school. Alphabet recognition lays a critical foundation for learning to read and write.
- Reading to children helps them to understand about books and print. Children need to understand that print carries a meaningful message and that stories have a structure. By hearing many stories read to them, and by discussing those stories, children learn that a story has a beginning, a middle, and an end; it has characters, setting, and plot. Children who have had exposure to many children's books can usually indicate when a story does not "make sense" even if they can't say that it has no plot. Through reading to children, parents can help them understand that there is a connection between the words on the page and what they hear as a story is read to them.
- Talking with your child about a book or story helps him develop vocabulary. As a child learns to speak, he also learns how to listen. He begins to understand how words are strung together to make sense, the patterns of language, and the ways language changes when used for different purposes such as giving directions, explaining or entertaining.
- Reading about the familiar helps children relate to what is being read to them. Beginning readers will have a hard time understanding what they read if they have no experiences to which they can connect the words. For example, it is difficult for a child who has never seen snow to understand a story about the hazards of traveling in a blizzard.
- Showing the relationship between writing and reading is another way to build reading skill. Helping children learn to write their name, compose notes to friends and family members, and copy favorite words are all ways that parents can help children develop understanding and skills in writing that transfer to reading.

Ways To Build a Reading Foundation for Your Child

- Label things in the home such as the table, the refrigerator, doors, etc. Collect the labels and have your child put them back on the correct objects.
- While in the car, walking or riding the bus, have the child look for and read familiar signs.
- Talk to children about what they like to do — their favorite games, pastimes and books. Listen to your child's stories, accounts of events and ideas.
- Make plans for the day with your child. As children get older, plans can be written in a short schedule. The schedule can be used to search for familiar words and to learn new words.
- Encourage your child to ask questions. Show how some questions can be answered by looking for information in books.

Ways To Help Your Child Develop Vocabulary and Concepts

- Talk about new words the child hears and connect them to words the child already knows.
- Look for letters of the alphabet in signs on a trip.
- Play the game, I see something..., where one person describes an object in view and the other(s) must guess what it is.
- Help children make connections among words or concepts such as "winter–cold, snow-holidays" or "dinner–food, family-evening."

Ways To Talk with Your Child About Books

- Ask your child to predict what might happen next while reading a story. Be sure to ask your child to give reasons for the prediction.
- Ask your child why a character might have taken a specific action. Again, ask for the reasons behind the answer.
- Ask your child to compare a book to another familiar book. How are the characters alike or different? Do the stories take place in similar places? How are the illustrations similar or different?
- Ask what part of the story the child liked best and why.
- Ask whether the child liked the ending of the story and why or why not.

Ways To Help Your Child Connect Reading and Writing

- Encourage your child to draw pictures about books or experiences. Drawing is a preparation for writing because it develops both the muscles needed for writing and children's ability to represent their ideas.
- Show your child how to write her name.
- Help your child to compose a note to a relative or friend. Have your child dictate as you write. Read the note back to the child pointing to the words as you read them. Older children can look for familiar words in the note.

Examples of online literacy resources recommended by NCTE and IRA

The following pages contain links for teachers and parents to use as resources. These sites were recommended by the International Reading Association (IRA) and The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

[25 Activities for Reading and Writing Fun \(Reading Rockets Web Site\)](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/392/)

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/392/>

"Fun" is the key word in this selection of 25 reading and writing activities for families with children (infants to sixth grade). Scroll through to find your child's grade range and then pick an activity to do today!

[Between the Lions](http://pbskids.org/lions/index.html)

<http://pbskids.org/lions/index.html>

This website is designed for parents and kids to surf together. Stories from the popular PBS show are posted online with links to associated games.

[Book Adventure](http://www.bookadventure.com/)

<http://www.bookadventure.com/>

Book Adventure is a free reading motivation program for children in grades K-8. Children create their own booklists from recommended titles, take multiple choice quizzes on the books they've read offline, and earn points and prizes for their literary successes.

[Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site](http://www.carolhurst.com/index.html)

<http://www.carolhurst.com/index.html>

This site is a collection of reviews of great books for kids, ideas of ways to use books in the classroom, and collections of books and activities about particular subjects, curriculum areas, themes, and professional topics.

[The Children's Book Council \(CBC\)](http://www.cbcbooks.org)

<http://www.cbcbooks.org>

A cosponsor with IRA of the Children's Choices project, CBC promotes the use and enjoyment of children's trade books and is the official sponsor of Young People's Poetry Week and National Children's Book Week.

[Enlighten Me](http://www.enlightenme.com/enlightenme/pta/)

<http://www.enlightenme.com/enlightenme/pta/>

Created by Verizon Reads and FableVision, this website for children ages 7-12, as well as parents, teachers, and caregivers, features articles, activities, and booklists designed to promote creative thinking and encourage a lifelong love of reading.

[International Children's Digital Library \(ICDL\)](http://en.childrenslibrary.org/)

<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>

Imagine a world where a comprehensive library of international children's literature is available to all children across the globe. With participants from around the world, this 5-year research project is building an international collection of children's books that reflects both the diversity and quality of children's literature. Currently, the collection includes materials donated from 27 cultures in 15 languages.

[Library in the Sky](http://www.libraryinthesky.org/)

<http://www.libraryinthesky.org/>

Containing over 15,000 links to educational resources on the Internet, this site guides teachers, students, parents, librarians, and members of the community on their journeys through cyberspace.

[Merriam-Webster Online: The Language Center](http://www.merriam-webster.com/)

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

You can access the full text of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* and *Collegiate Thesaurus*. Site links take you to word games and the featured "Word of the Day".

[The Miss Rumphius Award](http://web.wm.edu/education/research/cdjohn/)

<http://web.wm.edu/education/research/cdjohn/>

The Miss Rumphius Award is presented by members of the RTEACHER mailing list (listserv) to educators who develop and share exceptional Internet resources for literacy and learning. An annotated list of links to award-winning websites is provided.

[National Education Association \(NEA\)](http://www.nea.org/)

<http://www.nea.org/>

NEA advances the cause of public education. Their website has a section for parents about how to get involved in and improve their child's education.

[Read Across America](http://www.nea.org/grants/886.htm)

<http://www.nea.org/grants/886.htm>

NEA's Read Across America program calls for every child in America to be reading in the company of a caring adult on March 2, Dr. Seuss's birthday.

[Reading Is Fundamental \(RIF\)](http://www.rif.org/)

<http://www.rif.org/>

RIF develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate school-age children to read. Through a national network of teachers, parents, and volunteers, RIF programs provide books and other essential literacy resources to children, at no cost to them or their families.

[Reading Rockets](http://www.readingrockets.org)

<http://www.readingrockets.org>

A project of WETA, the public broadcasting station in Washington, DC, this site provides detailed information about learning to read and strategies for supporting struggling readers at home, at school, and in the community. It offers news, practical information, expert advice, and resources for parents, teachers, tutors, child care providers, and policymakers.

[Reading Tips for Spanish-Speaking Parents](#)

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>

Reading Rockets, a multimedia initiative of PBS station WETA, created ¡Colorín Colorado! , the first major Web site specifically for Spanish-speaking parents to help their children learn to read. Featuring beautiful illustrations from Caldecott Award-winning illustrator David Diaz and entertaining video clips of celebrities such as the late Celia Cruz, Miguel Varoni and author Pat Mora, the site also includes downloadable resources for teachers and librarians to distribute to parents in their own communities.

[RIF Reading Planet](#)

<http://www.rif.org/kids/readingplanet.htm>

RIF Reading Planet is a place where kids and families come together to explore the world of books. Grown-ups can browse through a universe of activities and ideas for motivating kids to read. Kids can post reviews of favorite books and participate in interactive games and activities.

[Talking Over Books](#)

<http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/talking/>

Part of the UTOPIA project of the University of Texas at Austin, this site provides ideas and resources for sharing books with young children: reading them, discussing them, enjoying them together, and celebrating the child's developing literacy skills.

[Word Central](#)

<http://www.wordcentral.com/>

Merriam-Webster's site just for kids features the "Daily Buzz Word", spelling bee quizzes, student dictionaries, and "Build Your Own Dictionary."

[Young Authors' Workshop](#)

<http://www.planet.eon.net/~bplaroach/Teacher.html>

Links to websites on all aspects of the writing process for kids, including places to publish their writing.

[YourKidsLibrary.com](#)

<http://yourkidslibrary.com/index.htm>

With the goal of reviewing every Newbery medalist and honor book back to 1922, David Ross of the *Press-Telegram* offers over 400 synopses (so far). The reviews include curricular ties and reading levels as well as anecdotal comments.

Online literacy resources compiled by Literacy Matters

<http://www.literacymatters.com/>

Misunderstood Minds: Reading

www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/readingstrats.html

This PBS site is written especially for parents of struggling readers.

Guided Reading Opportunities in Good Literature

www.carolhurst.com/profsubjects/reading/guided.html

Literature and reading specialist Carol Hurst discusses techniques for using popular children's books-including *Holes*, *Shiloh*, and *Autumn Street*-to help children improve reading comprehension.

Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension

http://ed-web3.educ.msu.edu/reports/ed-researchrep/03/march_03_3.htm

In this overview of the research on reading comprehension, the authors discuss what makes a good reader as well as strategies for turning poor readers into good readers.

KidBibs Learning Tips

www.kidbibs.com/learningtips.htm

Some of these learning tips describe how to help children succeed in school in reading and writing. Each tip sheet includes overview information, teaching techniques, and support materials. All of the tips are written by an educator who is also a mother.

Study Skills: Reading

familyeducation.com/topic/front/0,1156,23-28930,00.html?relinks

This is a selection of resources at the Family Education Network that cover reading comprehension and reading habits; skimming and sight-reading; and notes, test-taking, and homework.

Literacy and Education Organizations

Get Ready to Read!

<http://www.GetReadytoRead.org/index.php>

A national initiative to build the early literacy skills of preschool-age children.

Literacy Center: The Early Childhood Education Network

<http://www.literacycenter.net/>

It provides safe learning activities for parents and teachers to share with young children, both in English and Spanish.

Literacy Corner

<http://www.albany.edu/cela/literacycorner/default.htm>

Provides useful information about helping young children (3-6 years) develop the skills they need to begin to read and write

Reach Out and Read

<http://www.reachoutandread.org/>

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a program that promotes early literacy by bringing new books and advice about the importance of reading aloud into the pediatric exam room.

Read To Me International

<http://www.readtomeintl.org/>

Read To Me International promotes the belief that every child should be read to every day for ten minutes. Read To Me International believes that as stakeholders and communities everywhere come together to address the literacy needs of children, they will realize the importance of reading aloud to children as a simple yet effective way of raising children who value and love reading.

The following links were compiled by the International Reading Association

<http://www.reading.org>

The Comic Book Project

<http://www.comicbookproject.org/>

The goal of The Comic Book Project is to help children forge an alternative pathway to literacy through the visual arts. By employing a platform that links creativity to learning, The Comic Book Project has supported children who are struggling with their reading and writing skills, including children with limited English proficiency.

edHelper.com

<http://www.edhelper.com/ReadingComprehension.htm>

Lesson plans in all subjects; Web quests; math, spelling and vocabulary worksheets; sites for teachers; freebies; a newsletter; and education news updated daily can all be found on this site.

Family Education

<http://www.familyeducation.com/home/>

Provides standards-based activities, lesson plans, research tools, homework help, creative activities, printables, games, and instructional techniques for teachers and parents of children K-12.

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE)

<http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/cfapps/free/displaysubject.cfm?sid=5&subid=52>

This site has several federally supported educational resources.

FunBrain.com

<http://www.funbrain.com/>

This Family Education Network site provides free games and online quizzes for children K-8, parents, and teachers.

KidsHub.org

<http://quizhub.com/quiz/quizhub.cfm>

An online, interactive learning center that features free educational games, puzzles, quizzes, spelling activities, and subject guides.

No Child Left Behind

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

The No Child Left Behind website provides information and answers to questions about the U.S. federal legislation enacted in January 2002. The Act redefines the federal role in K-12 education and means to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers.