



Tips and Strategies for Reading with Children



About the ***Yamaska Literacy Council***

The Yamaska Literacy Council is a community-based organization that provides literacy services in English to support adults and older youth in Brome-Missisquoi and Haute-Yamaska. Services include:

- one-to-one tutoring
- scribe services (help reading documents and filling out forms)
- health/digital/financial literacies
- lifelong learning
- youth and family literacy

About ***Tips and Strategies for Reading with Children***

In 2009, volunteers from the community of Lac Brome approached the Yamaska Literacy Council (YLC) to partner on the *Village Reads* initiative. YLC presented a training session for the volunteers and created this booklet as a tool to support them.

Tips and Strategies for Reading with Children is a tool to support parents, caregivers and volunteers to foster a learning culture for children.

Let's continue to work together to support a love of reading!

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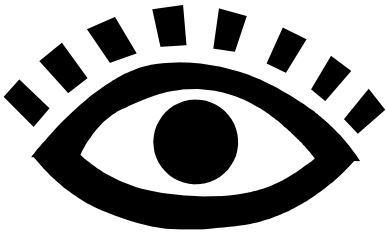
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How We Learn

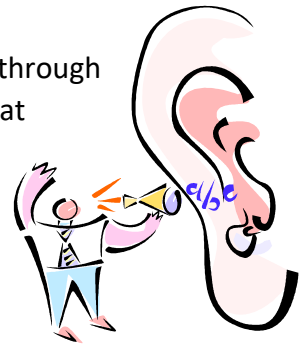
We all use a variety of learning styles, though most of us have a preferred or dominant learning style. Knowing a child's learning style will help you plan learning activities that meet her needs.

Learning Styles:



Visual learners learn through seeing. They tend to remember visual details (colours, images), rely on body language and facial expression to fully understand. They may think in pictures, learn best from visual displays and benefit most from written instructions.

Auditory learners learn through listening. They tend to learn best through conversations, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. They will listen to the tone of voice, pitch and speed for meaning. Verbal explanations rather than written information work well and they may not benefit from quiet study alone.



Tactile/Kinesthetic learners learn through, moving, doing & touching. They tend to learn best through a hands-on approach while actively exploring the physical world around them. They like doing an action, and may find it hard to sit still for long periods. Also, they may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

What Young Readers Learn when You Read to Them

What children will learn about books:

- Books are read right side up.
- They have a beginning, middle and an end.
- Storybooks are read one page at a time from the front cover to the back cover.
- People read across the page from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page.
- Books have stories, pictures and information inside.
- The words tell the story, and the pictures help the reader to imagine it.
- Books have covers and pages; authors write books; illustrators draw pictures, and the author gives the book a name called a title.
- There are different kinds of books.

What children will learn about sentences:

- A sentence stands for a spoken message.
- A sentence has a beginning and an end.
- A sentence can be identified by the way it begins with a capital letter and ends with a period or other punctuation mark.

What children will learn about words:

- The black shapes on the pages stand for the words being read.
- A word has a space before and after it.
- Words are made up of letters.
- Words come in many sizes. For example, a word can have only one letter.

What children will learn about letters:

- Only certain shapes (letters) are used to make words.
- Letters are arranged in different orders to stand for different words we speak.
- Each letter has two different looks that may include differences in both shape and size; these are called capital and small letters and have different uses.

What children may notice about punctuation:

- Certain shapes at the end of sentences, for example, an exclamation mark or a questions mark, tell you about the feeling or intent of the message.
- Other shapes, quotation marks, enclose and let you know when people are talking.

Choosing Books for Beginning Readers

1. Help children choose books that are of interest to them. They will find it easier to read about things that interest them.
2. Choose books with short, easy words, large print and not too many words. These books are less intimidating to a beginning reader.
3. Choose books with illustrations. The pictures help children to understand the meaning of the words.
4. Choose books with lots of rhyming and repetition. They are easy to remember and help children learn to read.
5. Choose books with predictable plots. These make reading easier by helping children to anticipate what will happen next.
6. Choose books that children can relate to their everyday experiences. Children will find it easier to read about things they know.

Tips for Reading Aloud

Before Reading

- ✓ Introduce the title, author and illustrator.
- ✓ Ask children to predict what the story might be about based on the title and the pictures.
- ✓ To begin to read, say something like, “Let’s read the story to find out if that is what happens”.

During Reading:

Have fun!

- ✓ Don’t read too quickly.
- ✓ Use a different voice for each character.
- ✓ Read with expression.
- ✓ As you read, occasionally stop and ask, “What do you think is going to happen next?”
- ✓ Run your finger under the words as you read.
- ✓ Encourage young children to “read” pictures.
- ✓ Let children read the parts they know.
- ✓ Take turns reading.
- ✓ Read the words together.
- ✓ Listen to children’s comments and answer their questions.

After Reading:

- ✓ Ask for children’s opinions of the story.
- ✓ Ask if they had favourite parts or characters.
- ✓ Ask if the story should be recommended to a friend.
- ✓ Encourage children to extend the story experience by:
 - retelling the story using puppets or drawings
 - telling or writing a new story about the characters
 - creating a different ending
 - telling the story from a different character’s point of view
 - acting out the story.

What is Reading?

READING = Decoding + Comprehension

Reading is the active process of getting meaning from print

It requires:

- Decoding symbols: **WORD RECOGNITION** (print skills)
- Making sense out of print: **COMPREHENSION** (meaning skills)

WORD RECOGNITION strategies:

- ✓ Develop a bank of sight words (flash cards)
- ✓ Use context to predict words (what makes sense?)
- ✓ Sound out words (phonics and phonemes)
- ✓ Break up words into parts (syllables, prefixes, suffixes)
- ✓ Use word patterns and word families (and...hand, sand, band)

Help your student combine comprehension with word recognition to become a better reader, ask questions such as:

- ✓ Does this make sense? Let's read it again
- ✓ What word would make sense in this spot?
- ✓ Let's skip that word and read the rest of the sentence.

COMPREHENSION strategies:

Look for true comprehension by:

- ✓ Asking for meaning
- ✓ Asking for the big picture
- ✓ Asking for inference
- ✓ Asking for conclusions
- ✓ Relating the story to real life

Detailed Questions:

- Detailed questions are appropriate for certain reading material like recipes, directions, and news stories. (How much sugar is needed?)
- Detailed questions are important when a certain fact is important to the story. (Why did the house burn down?)
- **NOT** every detail is important.

General Questions:

- Help your student see the "big picture".
- Don't always have a right or wrong answer.
- Invite your student to think and discuss; it helps with thinking strategies such as inferring, drawing conclusions, summarizing, comparing, analyzing.

Suggestions for making general questions:

For any reading

- ✓ What does that mean?
- ✓ What caused this to happen?
- ✓ What were the effects of...?
- ✓ Why...?
- ✓ How...?
- ✓ What is the difference between...and....?
- ✓ What if...?
- ✓ What do you think about the...?

For fiction

- ✓ What happened so far in the story?
- ✓ What do you think will happen next?
- ✓ Which characters do you like? Dislike? Why or why not?
- ✓ What was the best (worst, most interesting, funniest)...?
- ✓ Have you ever known anyone like this person?
- ✓ Have you ever done (felt, seen heard) anything like that?

For non-fiction

- ✓ What new information did you learn?
- ✓ How did the author organize this information?
- ✓ Do you agree or disagree? With what points? Why?
- ✓ Do you think the author was fair? Honest? Thorough?

If your student does not know the answer to a question:

- ✓ Ask a related question.
- ✓ Help your student look for the answer in the passage.
- ✓ Discuss or explain the answer.

Tips to Encourage the Self-Esteem of Young Readers

1. **Focus on reading for meaning.**

Let young readers know that reading is about making meaning. When we stop making sense of what we are reading, we need to do something: either go back to where we lost the meaning and/or read ahead for understanding.

2. **Overlook skipped words or wrong words if it does not interfere with the meaning.**

Don't correct a young reader who occasionally says "home" for "house" or "kids" for "children".

Do correct if a young reader says "deed" for "dead" or "cheese" for "choose", since it changes the meaning of the sentence. You might ask, "Does that make sense?"

A gentle way to correct could be to read the sentence back to the reader. He/she might self-correct. You might say, "Is this what you mean?"

3. **Don't expect perfection from young readers.**

Reading is about taking risks and making guesses. It is about making mistakes and learning. Expecting too much too soon may discourage young readers from taking chances and from learning to trust their own thinking.

4. **Speak positively about what the reader has done right.**

"I liked the way you used your voice to make that scene in the old house spooky".

"I noticed you used the rest of the sentence to figure out that hard word. That's a good thing to try".

"I enjoyed the speed of your reading—not too fast, not too slow".

5. **Make reading fun.**

Take turns reading. Use different voices.

6. **Let the young reader take ownership of reading and learning.**

Encourage young readers to select the books they want to read and the topics that interest them.

READING STRATEGIES

- ✓ Pre-Reading
- ✓ Let's Find Out
- ✓ Echo Reading
- ✓ Duet Reading
- ✓ Read Aloud
- ✓ Model Reading
- ✓ Experience Stories
- ✓ Cloze

NOTE: These strategies are adapted from the Yamaska Literacy Council Tutor Training for volunteer literacy tutors. The term "student" can be replaced by child/children.

Pre-Reading
Strategy # 1

Pre-Reading Survey

Purpose: To improve comprehension.
(This strategy can be used with most students most of the time.)

How to:

1. With your student, look at and talk about the title, contents, subtitles, pictures, captions, or any other material that previews the text.
2. If it's non-fiction, talk about the topic, ask questions and fill in missing background. Use diagrams, maps, or examples. Talk about what you might learn.
3. Look for some difficult words. Look them up in a dictionary.
4. If you are in the middle of the book, review the story so far.
5. If there are study questions at the end of the text, preview them before starting to read.

Let's Find Out

Purpose: To improve comprehension.
To provide a comprehension strategy that students can use on their own.

Use with a non-fiction passage

How to:

1. With the student, identify the topic of the material to be read.
2. Brainstorm: What do we already know about this topic? Make a list.
3. Brainstorm: What do we want to find out about this topic? Make a second list.
4. Ask your student to read the passage.
5. Compare the reading with your earlier brainstorming.
 - Was what you already knew confirmed?
 - Were your questions answered?
 - What more did you learn?

Echo Reading

Purpose: To help improve a student's fluency, phrasing and intonation.

Text: Look for material that is a bit too difficult for your student.

How to:

1. Ask the student to re-read the same material, imitating your phrasing and expression.
2. Read a phrase, sentence or paragraph from a passage.
3. Take turns reading until the passage is done.

Duet Reading

Purpose: To improve a student's reading fluency.
To build a student's vocabulary
To build a student's confidence

Note: This strategy is good for students who have **some** reading ability but who are reading hesitantly, word for word, or with no expression. It is not to develop comprehension, so don't ask your student questions about the text.

Text: Look for material that is a bit too difficult for your student to read alone.

How to:

1. Explain to your student that you will read together.
2. You begin reading. Set the pace a bit faster than your student would normally read.
3. When your student hesitates, keep going. Your student will catch up at the next pause.
4. If your student stops completely or is very frustrated, STOP.
5. Select another passage that is not quite as difficult.

Read Aloud

Purpose: To show your student how to tackle unknown words when reading.
To give support to your student when he/she is reading.

Text: Not too hard, but not too easy.

How to:

1. Ask your student to read aloud to you.
2. If your student has trouble with a word, wait a few seconds to give him/her a chance to figure it out. Then, depending on how hard the word is, and your student's skills, confidence, fatigue level, try one of the following, **but do not drag out the process so the flow of the story is lost:**
 - Tell your student the word
 - Say the first sound or first syllable
 - Help your student guess the word, by reading the words around it and then coming back to the unknown word
 - Remind the student of a rhyming word and change the beginning sound
"Sounds like..."
 - Help your student sound out the word
3. If the meaning has been lost, ask your student to re-read the sentence.

Reading
Strategy # 6

Model Reading

(See also “Suggestions for Reading Aloud”)

Purpose: To help your student become a fluent reader.

Text: Anything of interest to your student, any level.

How to: Read to your student!

Readers of all ages love having a story read to them. As a reading strategy, your student will learn many things when you read to him or her, including:

**intonation
phrasing
expression
fluency
word attack skills**

These are things that **all** good readers have in common. **Remember:** Practise makes perfect!

Be a reading role model!

Experience Story

Purpose: To make reading material from a student's own story.
For students who lack confidence (to show them that they can write a story)
For a change of pace.

How to:

1. Discuss a topic of interest to your student,
2. Have your student retell the experience or opinion. Write down the student's EXACT words—the student is the author.
3. Read the story back to the student, pointing to all the words. Ask the student if he or she wants any changes made.
4. Read the entire story together with your student, pointing to the words.
5. Read the first sentence together. Your student then reads this sentence alone.
6. Repeat this process with each of the remaining sentences, until the story is completed.
7. Ask comprehension questions based on the story (see "Asking Questions"). Your student reads the part of the story that answers each question.
8. Your student reads the entire story alone, with help as needed.

Options:

- Make a book of stories
- If your student likes to draw, ask them to illustrate the story
- Make flash cards of words that your student has difficulty with
- Cut up the sentences, and ask your student to put them back in the right order
- Practise making word families
- Take one word and see how many smaller words you can make from that word
- Change the tense of the story (past, present or future)
- Practise making words plural

The possibilities are endless!

Principles of Experience Story:

- Your student creates his or her own reading material.
- The stories reflect each person's vocabulary and interests.
- It focuses on your student's strength: the spoken language.
- It makes reading a personal experience: it connects reading, thinking, listening, talking and writing.

IDEAS TO GET EXPERIENCE STORIES

1. Use directed questions. Here are a few examples:

If you could have three wishes, what would they be? Why?

What is your favourite hobby? Describe it.

What is one of your funniest moments?

What's the best thing/time that's happened in your life?

What's your favourite sport/sports team?

What's your favourite animal?

2. Take a picture from a magazine, newspaper, a poster, etc., and ask your student to tell a story about it.
3. For some students, you may want to use incomplete sentences as paragraph starters. For example: "What's your favourite hobby?" can be reworded as "My favourite hobby is . . .

I like ...

I dislike...

I love...

I want...

I admire ...
I believe ...

I trust ...
I think ...

4. Read a story that interests your student and, as you go along, ask him to summarize the story. This technique is good in helping to strengthen comprehension. Use newspaper articles, magazines, or a book chosen by your student.
5. If your student enjoys music, ask him to dictate the words from one of his favourite songs. Copy the words and use it as an experience story.

CLOZE

Purpose: To help your student get meaning from text.

Text: Anything at your student's reading level.

How to:

1. Choose a passage that is at the student's reading level
2. If you want to use a paragraph, you must leave the first line and the last line as it is.
3. If you want to use a story, you must leave the first paragraph and the last paragraph intact.
4. Don't choose any words that are key to the meaning of the story
5. Leave every 10th word (or fewer) blank.

Remember: Choose material that you know your student will find interesting.

How to do a CLOZE

1. Read the CLOZE silently.
2. Re-read the CLOZE passage, writing in the words that seem to fit the blanks.
3. You ask your student WHY he made the choices he did.
4. Your student should compare his text with the original passage.
5. Discuss with your student whether the meaning was changed by certain responses.

Word Games

- Scrabble (and variations Scrabble Up, Scrabble Slam, etc.)
- Boggle
- Bananagram
- Spaceman (aka *Hangman*)
- Crosswords
- Find-a-word
- Puzzlemakers, on-line
<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/?CFID=992416&CFTOKEN=75177054>

Apps

- Sight Words: Sentence Builder
- Alphabet for kids ABC Learning
- Spelling & Phonics: Kids Games
- Kids Spelling game Learn words
- Bob Books Reading Magic Lite
- Endless alphabet
- Duolingo
- First words for baby

Websites

There are many interesting, fun and educational websites that have reading and writing activities for children.

www.starfall.com

- Systematic phonics approach, in conjunction with phonemic awareness practice.
- Preschool, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, special education, homeschool, and English language development.

www.readingbear.org

- Learn to read, teaches over 1,200 vocabulary items.
- 50 presentations cover all the main phonics rules.

www.funbrain.com

- Educational games, online books, and comics.
- Created for kids ages preschool through grade 8.
- Offers more than 100 fun, interactive games that develop skills in math, reading, and literacy.
- Kids can read a variety of popular books and comics on the site, including *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Amelia Writes Again*, and *Brewster Rocket*.

www.ixl.com

- Math for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 10 – curriculum specifically for Canada.

<http://www.freerice.com>

- Freerice players have fed millions of people since the game launched in October 2007. If we all do a little, we can achieve a lot! Builds vocabulary and social responsibility!

<http://www.factmonster.com>

- Fact Monster developed from a radio quiz show (1938), to an annual almanac (1947) to a website (1998) www.infoplease.com. The company has been providing authoritative answers in a way that engages and entertains for over 75 years.

<http://www.funology.com>

- A website with a vibrant and playful appearance. Great activities, jokes, and recipes arranged to make browsing the site easy.

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters/>

- Scholastic has many more activities than just the StoryStarters. Take the time to look through it for other resources.

<http://www.sciencebob.com/index.php>

- Science experiments with instructions.

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/games/teachers-corner.asp>

The teachers' section offers you games and resources to teach citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism subjects.

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/francais/jeux/coin-des-enseignants.asp>

La section des enseignants vous offre des jeux et des ressources pour enseigner les sujets liés à la citoyenneté, à l'immigration et au multiculturalisme.

<http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk>

Resources include online interactive learning materials; video clips which will bring the University to your desktop; downloadable resources and educational games.

<http://pbskids.org>

Learning Games with *The Cat in the Hat*, *Arthur*, *The Electric Company*, *Curious George*, etc.

<http://www.abcya.com>

Graded educational computer games.

<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/?CFID=992416&CFTOKEN=75177054>

Puzzlemaker is a puzzle generation tool for teachers, students and parents. Create and print customized word search, criss-cross, math puzzles, and more, using your own word lists.

**If you have other websites to recommend,
please let YLC know.**

info@yamaskaliteracy.ca

Helpful Tips for Reading with Children

- ✓ Understand your child's learning style
- ✓ Encourage your child
- ✓ Acknowledge success
- ✓ Give mini breaks often (just long enough to stretch or rest your eyes)
- ✓ Be patient
- ✓ **Have fun!**

Offer *positive* reinforcement

10 Ways to Say "Good"

You're doing great
Outstanding
Beautiful
That's right.
Nice going.

Fantastic! Keep up the good work.
How did you do that so fast?
You must have been practising!
Now you've got it.
You just taught me something.

10 Right Ways to Say "Wrong"

That's close!
That's a tricky one.
Oops!
English has a lot of crazy spellings.

Almost!
Let's try that again.
Oh, I forgot to explain this.
This causes trouble for a lot of people.

10 Things NOT to Say

NO.
Don't you remember?
This is really easy.
Don't you get it?
You're not concentrating.

That's wrong.
We had this before.
I explained that last week.
Everybody knows this.
You're not trying.

Thank you for making a difference!