

Literacy Corner:

Here are the **Big 5 ideas in Literacy**, and a few tips to help your children at home:

1. Phonemic Awareness (K, 1)

Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of speech sounds, or phonemes. Phonemes are the smallest parts of sounds in a spoken word that make a difference in a word's meaning.

Phonemic Awareness TIPS for parents:

Play Mystery Word:

- Ask your child to try to guess the word by listening to the sounds you say. For example, say the sounds of the word, cup (c-u-p), and have your child guess what the word is by blending the sounds together. Then switch roles and have your child say the sounds of a word, while you guess the mystery word. This will build your child's ability to blend and segment words.

2. Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. It teaches children to use these relationships to read and write words. The goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn and use the alphabetic principle----the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.

Phonics Instruction TIPS for parents:

- When your child attempts to decode a difficult word, some helpful prompts are;
"Does it look right?"
"Does it sound right?"
"Does it make sense?"
- You may also ask them to use the reading strategies they are learning in school, such as:
 - Tap out the sounds in the word
 - Use picture clues
 - Think about the beginning sound and the ending sound. What could the word be?
 - Look for patterns, small words, and familiar parts in words such as; am, at, ing

* When in doubt, give the word to your child, especially if they have attempted to solve it, or if it is an irregular word that is not decodable (said, what)

3. Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding. Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

Fluency TIPS for parents:

- Rereading favorite books
- Listening to books on CD
- Timed Reading Activities (words, phrases, text)
- Reader's Theatre

Help your child to monitor their own fluency by thinking about:

- Pace (not too fast/not too slow, but reading at a just right pace)
- Accuracy (stopping to use strategies to solve words)
- Phrasing (group words together, not word by word, no robot reading)
- Expression (using your voice to convey meaning, ex. If a character is excited, make your voice sound excited)
- Punctuation (. , ! ? example, your voice goes up when a question is asked)

4. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary can be described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print. Vocabulary contributes much to reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean. As children learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meanings of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary.

Vocabulary TIPS for parents:

- Help your child to use the information from the text (clues from the text itself, and/or pictures to determine the meaning)
- Increase your child's independence by teaching additional ways to find the definition of a word i.e., the internet, dictionary
- Create a vocabulary word jar at home or keep a vocabulary journal of new words learned

5. Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the reason for reading. As they read, good readers are both purposeful and active. Good readers have a purpose for reading. They may read to find out how to use a food processor, read a guidebook to gather information about state parks, read a textbook to satisfy an assignment, read a magazine for entertainment, or read a classic novel to experience and share great literature. Good readers think actively as they read. To make sense of what they read, good readers engage in a complicated process. Using their experiences and knowledge of the world, knowledge of vocabulary, and knowledge of reading strategies, they make sense of the text and know how to get the most out of it. They know when they have problems with understanding and how to resolve those problems as they occur.

Reading comprehension TIPS for parents:

- Ask your child questions about characters, setting, problem, solution, author's purpose (to inform or entertain the reader), main idea, and details that support the main idea
- Ask your child to sequence the story (beginning, middle, end or first, next, last, finally)
- Talk about inferences (reading between the lines, "How do you think the character feels based on the clues in the story and what you already know?")
- Have your child ask questions and think aloud while they read
- Give your child a focus question and have them pull evidence from the text to support their answer to the question

*All of these tips can be done orally or written.

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Please let us know how we can support your readers!
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