

# Tips to Help Your Child Become a Better Reader

When your child needs help reading an unknown word, try one of these prompts or questions:

- "Look at the picture." Readers can predict new words by looking at the picture. Readers use the picture to determine if what they read makes sense.
- "Try that again" or "read it again." If your child stops to figure out a new word, be sure to have him/her go back and read the entire sentence again to check for meaning.
- "Look at the beginning sound." Readers should initially look at the beginning letters of unknown words.
- "Blend or slide the sounds together." He or she can blend sounds together if it is a common spelling pattern.
- "Does it look right?" "Do the letters match the sounds you are saying?"
- "Does it sound right?" "Have you ever heard that word?"
- "Does it make sense?"
- "Look for a chunk or a part of the word that you know." Readers may know how to read a small part of the word and then look at the rest of the letters.
- "Are you right?" "How do you know you are right?" Your child should be able to explain how he/she knows that they read the word correctly.

To help your child comprehend what he or she is reading, try some of these questions:

Before reading:

- Read the title and look at the front cover. "Can you predict what will happen in this book or what this book is about?" "Why did you predict that?" Your child should use background knowledge or information from the cover of the book to make a reasonable prediction.

During reading:

- "Who are the characters?" "What is the setting of this story?"
- "Is this book fiction or non-fiction? How do you know?"
- "What has already happened in the story?" "What do you think will happen next?"

After reading:

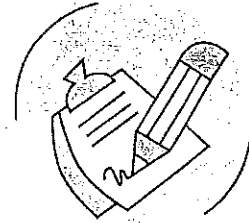
- "Did your predictions match what you read? Explain your answer."
- "Tell me what happened in the story. What happened at the beginning? The middle? And the end?"
- "What is the main idea of the story, or what is the story mostly about?"
- "What does this story remind you of?" A student should make a connection to a real-life experience or another book.



## Tips to Help Your Child Become a Better Writer

When your child is writing, he or she should:

- Have ideas that make sense and relate to one topic.
- Make a picture plan, sketch, and/or label the picture.
- Use pencils for writing and crayons, markers, and other art supplies for illustrations.
- Use sound spelling for words that he or she does not know. Ask him or her to take apart the sounds or say the word slowly and write the sounds he or she hears.
- Check for complete sentences with a capital letter at the beginning and correct punctuation marks at the end.
- Check for spacing between words. He or she can use a popsicle stick or other similar items to help make spaces.
- Spell words correctly that have been introduced on the word wall.
- Practice reading what he or she writes.
- Use his or her best handwriting so others can easily read the writing. Use the "sayings" on the Handwriting Without Tears handouts to help form letters correctly.





## Appendix B

### Helping Children with Reading **PHONEMIC AWARENESS**

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, produce, and manipulate the sounds of language. When children are able to segment words (break them apart sound by sound) and put them back together (blending) by hearing and saying them, they will become more successful readers. Providing opportunities to learn, practice and refine phonemic awareness skills are critical to a child's reading progression.

The following are phonemic awareness activities that will help strengthen this foundational part of reading for your child.

- Help your child recognize large chunks of language as in compound words. Say a compound word out loud to your child and ask that he/she tell you the two words that make up that compound word. Example: sunflower = sun/flower, butterfly = butter/fly
- Starting with simple 2 and 3 syllable words, model out loud how you would break a word apart by syllable. Take turns breaking words apart into syllables. Examples: pro-tect, en-ter, in-ter-est If needed have them clap out the number of syllables in words and names.
- Play rhyming games with your child. In the car say a word and ask your child to supply a word that would rhyme. (cat, sat, bat, hat, slat, flat or back, tack, stack) Have fun chanting a string of words that rhyme.
- Say a word to your child and have them break the word apart (segment) into individual sounds  
Example: you say "black" and your child says, /b/ /l/ /a/ /ck/ or /bl/ /ack/
- Ask your child to blend sounds together when you break them apart.  
Examples: /g/ /e/ /t/ = get /f/ /r/ /o/ /g/ = frog
- To strengthen your child's auditory sequencing have your child repeat a string of unrelated words  
Examples: cat, snow  
bread, tire, house, parachute  
television, pencil, car, watermelon, school

The goal is to help your child hold more words in auditory memory so that when they segment words while reading they will be able to hold the "chunks" of the words long enough in auditory memory to blend the "chunks" back together into the word.



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# Helping Children with Reading PHONICS

Phonics is the component of reading in which children connect sounds to symbols and put sounds together into syllables and words. Students need repetitive and consistent practice with phonics to achieve success. Try the following activities if your child is struggling in the component of phonics.

### ABC ACTIVITIES

- Put together alphabet puzzles together. Discuss the letters and the associated sounds.
- Read a variety of alphabet books to your child.
- Make an A-Z book with your child by cutting pictures out of magazines that start with different letters of the alphabet.
- Play "I Spy" with your child while driving in the car. "I spy something that begins with "d." Take turns guessing.
- Purchase magnetic alphabet letters to use on your refrigerator. Work with your child on letter recognition and sound knowledge. Begin putting the letters together to make simple words.

### WORD GAMES

- Write words on index cards and have your child match the word up with the corresponding picture.
- Say an initial sound and have your child match the sound to a picture that starts with that initial sound. Example: Say /b/ and have your child find matching picture for that initial letter sound.
- Say a word and have your child match a spoken word with the written word.
- Make word card sets (2 cards of each word). Have your child find the words that match.
- Play bingo and memory games that emphasize letter recognition (uppercase as well as lowercase) letter sounds, words, etc.
- Cut apart words: Kids enjoy having letter cards to move and manipulate. As you have your child rhyme words, write them on note cards. Cut the words apart by compound words, syllables, sounds, or prefix/suffix and see if they can put them back together.

### WRITING

- Have your child write everyday. Writing and reading help each other. To improve in reading your child needs to write and to be a better writer your child needs to read. When a child writes he/she sounds out the words during the writing process resulting in improved phonic skills.
- Have your child:
  - draw pictures and then write a few sentences about the picture
  - write letters to relatives and friends
  - make lists and notes
  - draw maps and label the items on the map
  - keep a travel journal while on family vacations



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# HELPING CHILDREN WITH READING 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. (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001)

These activities can help your child increase vocabulary skills.

### APPLICATION

- Engage your child in daily conversation using a rich challenging vocabulary. Define and talk about new words that are introduced. Give examples of how to use new words in multiple contexts.
- Model and teach your child to use context (surrounding words, sentence structure, pictures) to figure out word meanings.

### WORD KNOWLEDGE

- Provide an environment with vocabulary resources for your child to utilize such as: dictionaries, thesauruses, and word origin books.
- Subscribe to a free dictionary website such as [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com). They will email you a "word of the day." Discuss the word of the day with your child and how to incorporate that word into daily conversations with others. Challenge your child to use that word throughout their day. At the end of the week add that week's words to your own "word of the day" dictionary.
- Discuss affixes (prefixes & suffixes) when reading with your child. Encourage them to extend past the given word and give examples of other words with those affixes and root bases. "What other words do you know that start with inter?" "Can you name any other words that contain sub?"

### BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- Continue to read aloud to your child, even when they are proficient in reading. Choose a book above your child's reading level that contains a rich vocabulary.
- Discuss words they already know and put new words into multiple contexts for vocabulary extensions.
- Read from a variety of text such as fiction, poetry, plays, science fiction, and non-fiction including directions, newspapers, websites, etc.
- Expose your child to experiences they will be expected to understand when they read. Examples: zoos, museums, nature walks, exhibits, fairs.





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# HELPING CHILDREN WITH READING FLUENCY

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression. A fluent reader has few if any decoding issues and can recognize words quickly, allowing attention to be placed on the comprehension of the text. When working on different components of fluency, you will want to be sure and choose books that are in the child's independent reading level (fairly easy for the child). If the book is too difficult, you will be unable to focus on fluency because the child's attention will need to be more on decoding the text. Readers who are fluent are able to focus their attention on meaning rather than on decoding.

### ACCURACY

- Help your child develop rapid word recognition that is effortless. Put commonly used words such as color words, number words, object names, on index cards and rapidly flash them to your child.
- Older children can work on subject specific vocabulary words such as: dates and places in history, scientific and mathematical formulas, etc.
- Pattern books! There are many wonderful pattern books with a lot of repetition that tell stories, contain song lyrics or poetry, or contain repeated text that are highly motivating to read over and over again. Have your child read those types of books over and over again to achieve a smooth sound to their reading.

### SPEED

- Repeated readings of familiar and favorite texts aid in the development of fluency. Have your child reread short books or passages 3-5 times. Time your child during the first reading and last reading and celebrate growth. (Note: Do not emphasize speed without accuracy.)
- Have your child practice reading a book to a younger sibling with the purpose of rereading.
- Read along with your child to help them with pacing of their reading.

### EXPRESSION and PROSODY

- Model fluent reading from a variety of sources: books, magazines, poetry, newspapers and advertisements. Students benefit from hearing the phrasing and rhythm from different types of text. Children often want their parents to reread the same books over and over again because they love the sound and predictability of language.
- With your child read books with a lot of dialogue. Take turns being different characters, changing your voice appropriately for each character.
- Tape record your child reading and play it back for them. After practicing a selection several times, play it back to them showing them their improvement. This is very motivating.
- Read together every day with a focus on expression and rhythm. Texts that work especially well include rhyming, predictable print books, poems and song lyrics. Well-written mystery stories use language to manipulate the reader's pacing as a method for building suspense.
- Repetition, repetition, repetition! When working on fluency, students should practice with books that are fairly easy for them to read accurately. For younger readers, following along with song lyrics or taped stories can help students become more fluent. Students may need to reread stories several times before they can read them accurately with speed and expression.







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# HELPING CHILDREN WITH READING COMPREHENSION

Webster defines comprehension as "to look at carefully so as to understand the meaning of something written or printed: to read a book." If readers just simply read words, without understanding what they are reading, they are not reading. The reason for reading is comprehension – making meaning from print. Good readers are purposeful and active in their reading and monitor their comprehension. Comprehension is the integration of all 5 components.

The following are suggestions for how you can assist your child in comprehending what they read.

### BEFORE READING

- Help your child activate background knowledge. Ask questions such as: "What do you know about the rainforest?" "Have you ever seen that animal before?"
- Set a purpose for reading: Ask your child, "Why would someone want to read this book?" "What will you learn about?" or "What will be enjoyable about reading this book?"
- Make predictions about the text and what might be read. "When do you think this story is taking place? Past or Present?"
- Take a picture walk through the book and let your child become acquainted with the text structure (illustrations, table of contents, chapter headings, captions, graphs, maps, indexes, glossaries, etc.).
- Discuss vocabulary words that your child may not know. If possible, personalize the definitions to your child's life to provide a stronger link of understanding. Give several definitions to build a broad knowledge base for those words. "Remember when Grandma visited? You saw her *prosthetic* teeth."

### DURING READING

- Pause periodically while reading and ask your child the five "W" questions: Who, When, Where, What, Why.
- Ask questions which require your child to go beyond the obvious or literal information. "How do you think that character felt?" "How could you use the information you just read?"
- Model aloud to your child the skill of thinking and self-monitoring while reading, also known as metacognition. Example: "I never thought about that." "Wait, that didn't make sense." Model going back and rereading when meaning is lost.
- Help your child make connections between what he is reading and what he already knows.

### AFTER READING

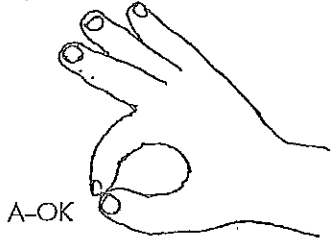
- Ask your child to retell what was just read. Look for details, events, and main ideas to be a part of the retell. Listen for beginning, middle, and end and a sense of story in fiction. Listen for facts, insights, and conclusions.
- Have your child summarize what she has just read.
- Ask both literal and inferential questions. Have her show you where her answer is supported in the text.



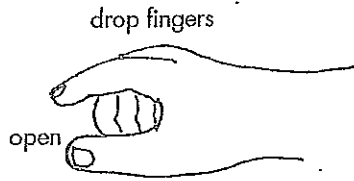
The tips shown here will help your students hold the pencil with the right combination of mobility and control. These exercises make it easy and fun for children to learn a correct pencil grip.

### A-OK

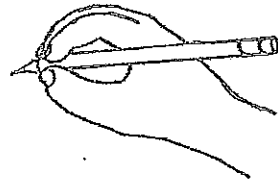
**Right-handed**



**Step 1.**  
Make the A-OK sign.

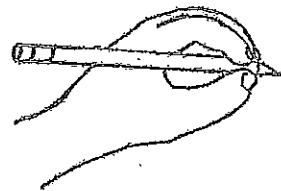
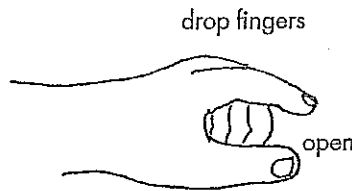
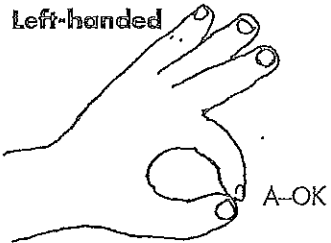


**Step 2.**  
Drop the fingers.  
Open the A-OK.



**Step 3.**  
Pinch the pencil.

**Left-handed**

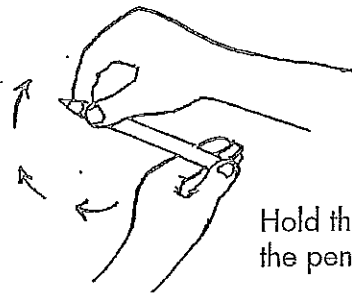


### Flip the Pencil Trick

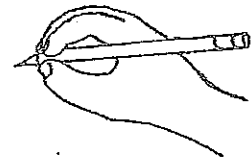
Here is another method. It is a trick that someone introduced to us at a workshop. It's such fun that we love to share it. Children like to do it and it puts the pencil in the correct position. (Illustrated for right-handed students.)



Place pencil on table pointing away from you. Pinch the pencil on the point where the paint meets the wood.



Hold the eraser and twirl the pencil around.



Voila!  
Correct grip.

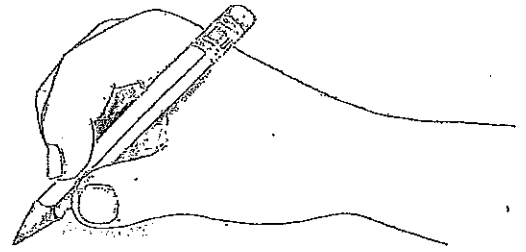
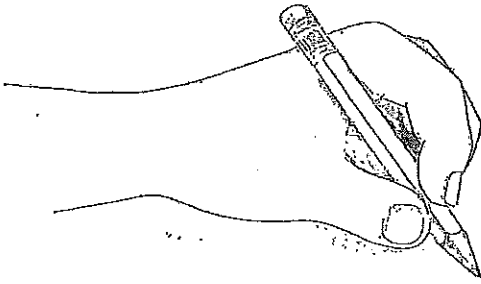
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## The Correct Grip

The standard way for children to hold their pencil is illustrated below. If you write using a grip that is different than tripod or quadropod, alter your grip for classroom demonstration.

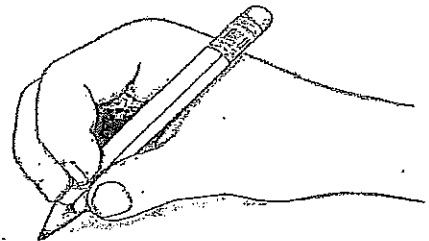
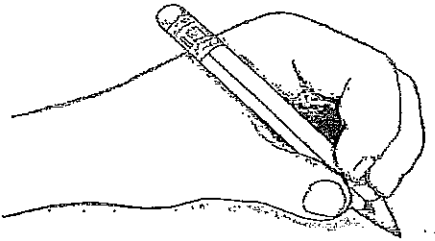
### Tripod Grip

Thumb, Index Finger, Middle Finger



### Quadropod Grip

Thumb, Index Finger, Middle Finger, Ring Finger

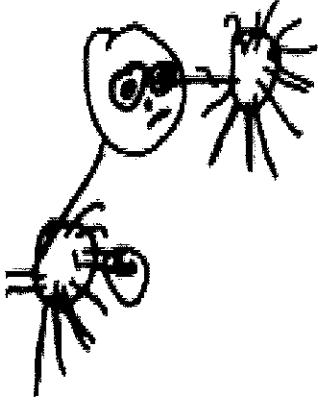

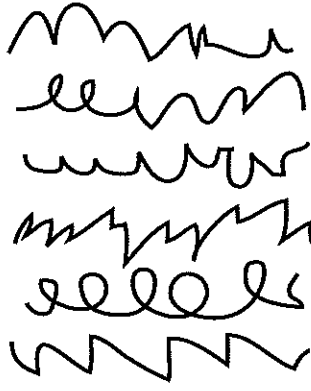

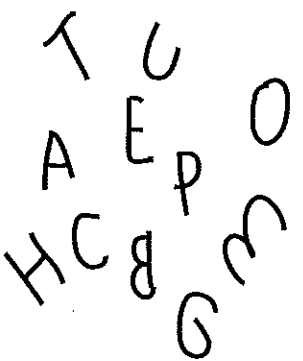

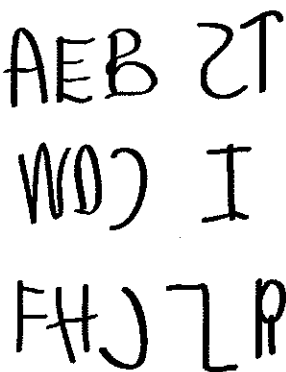
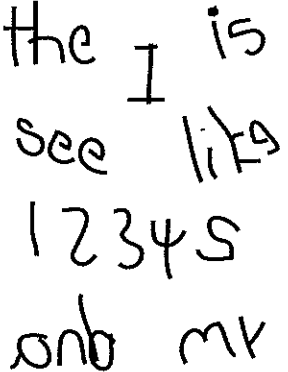


### A Note About Pencil Size



Start by using golf size pencils in kindergarten and first grade. As children gain handwriting experience, their control will improve. At that time, transition them to a standard size pencil.

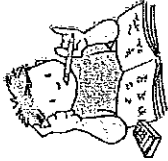
# HeidiSongs' Chart of the Developmental Progression of A Child's Writing

 <p>1. Pictures</p>	 <p>2. Random Scribbling</p>	 <p>3. Scribble Writing (Written in linear fashion to mimic real writing.)</p>	 <p>4. Symbols That Represent Letters</p>
 <p>5. Random Letters (No relationship between sounds of letters and what the child is trying to say.)</p>	 <p>6. Letter Strings (Progresses from left to right and top to bottom when the child "reads" his writing.)</p>	 <p>7. Letter Groups (The groups have spaces in between to resemble words.)</p>	 <p>8. Environmental Print (Child copies print found in the room, often without knowing what the words are.)</p>
<p>Theh canr (The horse can run.)</p> <p>9. Beginning Sounds (Child begins to write simple sentences using sight words and just the beginning sounds of words.)</p>	<p>We wn to the s (We went to the store.)</p> <p>10. Early Inventive Spelling (Includes the same elements as the previous level, but with more consonant sounds represented and spaces between words.)</p>	<p>To daye i wot to play withf the white board and the shapes and I won to play with My feh (Today I want to play with the white board and the shapes, and I want to play with my friend.)</p> <p>11. Inventive Spelling (Has the same elements as the previous level, but with more sounds per word written, including the vowels. Some conventional spelling patterns may appear.)</p>	<p>One day I saw my Frid it was Israel and Antonio and Thay got lost I fad Thim. The end (One day, I saw my friends. It was Israel and Anthony and they got lost. I found them. The end.)</p> <p>12. Transitional Writing (Includes all of the previous elements, plus some real spellings of words with silent letters and other spelling patterns. Punctuation is beginning to appear.)</p>



# Problem Solving

## Read and Think

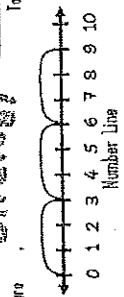


Understand

- ● ● ●
  - ○ ○ ○
- Act Out or  
Draw a Picture

Choose a  
Strategy

Friend	Coins
1	3
2	6
3	9



Plan

Do

Solve the Problem

$$3 + 3 + 3 = 9$$

Check

Explain Your Work

"I made three hops of 3 on the number line"

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# C.U.B.E.

Circle the numbers.

Underline important words.

Box the question.

Eliminate unnecessary info.