

Boosting Reading Comprehension—Reading Comprehension

What the Research Says

- The term *Reading Comprehension* refers to the process of interacting with a text (books, magazines, newspapers, websites, etc.) to construct meaning.
- Ultimately, the purpose of reading is to learn, understand and/or appreciate ideas and information.
- Reading Comprehension starts in the early years, before children can read by themselves. This happens through listening and interacting with books and other reading materials.
- Children need many opportunities to engage in book readings to develop the foundation for reading comprehension.
- Reading and re-reading a wide variety of texts in the early years contributes greatly to reading comprehension.
- Researchers have found that good readers are active readers who think about the text before, during, and after the reading experience.
- Researchers have found a direct link between vocabulary development and reading comprehension. The stronger a child's vocabulary, the stronger the reading comprehension.

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Activities for Families

- Have fun reading together every day, even if just for a few minutes. With three-five year olds, most reading times last about 10 minutes.
- Check out the local public library. The library may have special literacy activities for you and your child.
- Put your child’s books in a small bookshelf or basket on the floor so she can get them easily.
- Ask your child to “join in” when reading books that have the same text repeated over and over.
- Make connections from the book to your child’s life experiences. Children who can make connections to their own lives show better reading comprehension.
- Invite your child to think and talk about the book while you are reading together. Ask questions, make comments, and encourage questions and predictions from your child.
- Ask your child to “read” the book to you by looking at the pictures. This will help him learn story sequence and enhance his ability to predict what will happen next.
- Act out what happened in the book. Stuffed animals, dress-up clothes and other household items can lead to fun and engaging connections with stories.
- If your child likes to draw and write, spend time together drawing pictures about the stories that you read. These can be used so your child can re-tell the story, using his own words.

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Advice for Families

- When selecting books, choose topics that interest your child.
- Use books as a time to have conversation about what you are reading.
- Ask your child questions about the book before, during, and after you read the book. This helps your child think and make personal connections to the book.
- When reading books that tell a story, ask your child to *predict* what will happen next. *Prediction* is an important reading comprehension strategy.
- Involve your child in the reading experience. When children question, comment, think, and point to pictures, they are comprehending what the author has written.
- Spend time talking about new words your child may not understand. Learning new vocabulary will enhance reading comprehension.
- Follow your child’s lead. You don’t always have to read the entire book. Reread favorite books over and over.
- Read fiction (story books) and non-fiction (books and magazines that have facts and photographs). Reading non-fiction books lays the foundation for later comprehension of science, math, and social studies texts.