

Making Reading Fun-Reading Comprehension (Questioning)

What the Research Says

- **Reading aloud** to children has been called the most important activity for building knowledge and skills a child needs to be a successful reader.
- Experts have identified some **simple strategies** that can help children get the most from a book reading experience.
- One strategy experts have identified that can help children get the most from a reading experience is **asking questions**.
- Asking questions **before, during, and after** book readings help children focus on what they are doing and learn more from the book experience.
- Questions stimulate children's thinking, curiosity, and imagination and **makes reading fun**.
- There are **three kinds of questions** adults can ask children when talking or reading with them.
 1. **"Yes/No"** questions are considered the easiest questions for children to answer and most can do so by their second birthday.
 2. **"Wh"** questions start with "who," "what," "where," and "when." By the time children are three, most can answer "wh" questions. (Young children are just beginning to understand the concept of time, so "when" questions may be more difficult.)

3. **“Open-ended”** questions can be answered in many different ways and usually start with “how”, “what if”, or “why.”

Examples of question types

Yes/No Questions

Is the boy happy now?

Will the car hold all those people?

Did Goldilocks like Papa Bear’s porridge?

Do you like their idea?

Will they have enough time?

WH Questions

What house do you think will be the strongest?

Who will help them?

What is she wearing now?

Where did the dog go?

Who does baby want?

Open Ended Questions

How do you think the baby feels?

What will happen if they forget to tie the dog up?

How could they fix their broken bike?

What do you think Goldilocks will do when she sees Baby Bear in her bed?

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Activities for Families

- Ask just a few questions before, during, and after a book reading. Too many questions can interfere with the focus and flow of the book.
- Before reading, ask questions like, “What do you think this book is about?” or “Does this book remind you of another book we have read?”
- During the book reading, ask questions like, “What do you think will happen next?” or “How do you think that made him feel?”
- After reading the book, ask questions like, “What was your favorite part of the book?” or “Does this story remind you of anything we have done?”
- Ask only one question at a time. Children sometimes need up to 5 seconds to think before they are ready with their answer.
- Encourage young children to ask questions during the book reading. When children ask questions it shows they are thinking and engaged in the book.

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Advice for Families

- Use questioning as a strategy to *invite* your child to talk, not to quiz her.
- When reading, turn off the television, cell phones, computers, etc. This will help your children stay focused on the book. The brain can only pay attention to one thing at a time.
- Follow your child's lead. If you think the questioning is interfering with his/her enjoyment of the book, try it again another time.
- Use photographs and pictures in books to provide a reference for questions that you ask. Drawing attention to the visual aspects can help your child be successful in answering questions.
- Remember, children develop at their own rate. Children need many opportunities to practice new skills before they do it with ease.
- Choose fiction and non-fiction books that interest your child. Research shows that young boys may prefer non-fiction books, while young girls may prefer non-fiction.
- Carry a favorite book in your purse or the glove compartment of your car. It's a great way to spend time while you are waiting to pick up a sibling, while you are waiting for an appointment, or enjoying some time at the park.