

# How to Read with a Beginning Reader

By: Joanne Meier (2009)

Most beginning readers are inconsistent. Learn more about the characteristics of a beginning reader and simple techniques and tips to nurture your child's skills and joy in reading.

Sometimes parents of beginning readers wonder if their child is on track with reading. They don't understand why their child can't read a word today they were able to read yesterday. They think their child reads too slowly. They grumble that their child only wants to read the same book over and over again.

Most beginning readers are inconsistent. They may know a word one day but not the next. They may read a particular word correctly on one page, but they have to stop and sound it out again on the next page. When you listen to a beginning reader, you hear short, choppy words with little attention to punctuation. Sometimes a new reader can tell you very little about what they just read.

At the beginning stage of reading, all of these reading behaviors are to be expected. Beginning readers are building their fluency. This means they're working to make several skills, like matching a letter to a sound and decoding, more smooth, accurate and automatic. Without fluency, each word must be decoded, and that takes time and energy. This means that other reading behaviors like reading with expression and comprehension have less of a focus.

When reading with a beginning reader, it's important to do the following:

1. Give them time to read. Reading is a skill, and like many other skills, it takes time to develop. A beginning reader should spend at least 20 minutes a day reading to or with someone. The books read during this time should be relatively easy for your child.
2. Let them reread the same books. Rereading the same words over and over again helps build fluency. Over time, you'll notice that your child will stop less often to decode words.
3. Encourage attention to the print. If your child is stuck on a word, help him look at the first letter(s) and encourage him to sound it out. If it's a difficult word, or one that can't be sounded out, simply supply the word and continue reading.
4. Take turns reading. By listening to your fluent reading, your child will hear what good readers sound like. After you've read a short passage, ask your child to reread the same passage. This provides a chance for her to practice reading with expression.
5. Have realistic expectations. For example, students should be reading approximately 60 words per minute correctly by the end of first grade, and 90-100 words per minute correctly by the end of second grade. Your child's teacher can help you learn your child's reading rate.

# Reading Tips for Parents of First Graders

By: Reading Rockets (2008)

Give your child lots of opportunities to read aloud. Inspire your young reader to practice every day! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

## **Don't leave home without it**

Bring along a book or magazine any time your child has to wait, such as at a doctor's office. Always try to fit in reading!

## **Once is not enough**

Encourage your child to re-read favorite books and poems. Re-reading helps kids read more quickly and accurately.

## **Dig deeper into the story**

Ask your child questions about the story you've just read. Say something like, "Why do you think Clifford did that?"

## **Take control of the television**

It's difficult for reading to compete with TV and video games. Encourage reading as a free-time activity.

## **Be patient**

When your child is trying to sound out an unfamiliar word, give him or her time to do so. Remind to child to look closely at the first letter or letters of the word.

## **Pick books that are at the right level**

Help your child pick books that are not too difficult. The aim is to give your child lots of successful reading experiences.

## **Play word games**

Have your child sound out the word as you change it from mat to fat to sat; from sat to sag to sap; and from sap to sip.

## **I read to you, you read to me**

Take turns reading aloud at bedtime. Kids enjoy this special time with their parents.

## **Gently correct your young reader**

When your child makes a mistake, gently point out the letters he or she overlooked or read incorrectly. Many beginning readers will guess wildly at a word based on its first letter.

## **Talk, talk, talk!**

Talk with your child every day about school and things going on around the house. Sprinkle some interesting words into the conversation, and build on words you've talked about in the past.

## **Write, write, write!**

Ask your child to help you write out the grocery list, a thank you note to Grandma, or to keep a journal of special things that happen at home. When writing, encourage your child to use the letter and sound patterns he is learning at school.

