

Parent Resources Related to Reading Well by 3rd Grade Plan

Dear St. Croix Preparatory Academy Lower School Families,

Reading well is truly the heart of all learning. This document provides you with strategies to help your child read better, information on the five components of reading, the Reading Comprehension Big 5, and recommended reading websites.

Happy Reading!

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Strategies to Help Your Child Read Better

- We know that parent and family involvement is a key ingredient that contributes to students' success in education in general and reading in particular. Research shows that students who read the most do best in school.
- Talk to your child about all the ways reading is used in life.
- Model reading in free time to your child. Let them see that you find pleasure in reading. Talk about cool things that you're reading or have read.
- Read out loud to your child. A read aloud offers an opportunity to 'take a look inside' the reading of an expert and understand that, first and foremost, reading is language and should sound like it. Oral reading becomes the model that your child will strive to achieve.
- Read at the same time (choral type reading) pointing to the words as they are read. Both comprehension and word recognition increase remarkably when children read routinely with parents.
- Discuss new words. For example, "This big house is called a palace. Who do you think lives in a palace?"
- When you read together, ask questions.
- Students who read at least 20 minutes per day (outside of school) will do better in school. Allow your child to go to bed 15 minutes later if they read. He/she doesn't feel like reading? No problem, bedtime is at the regular time.

- Make regular visits to the library. Explore all that's available for your free use.
- A great way to improve your child's confidence and fluency (smoothness and speed of reading) is to practice by reading a book many times. Repeated readings are a highly effective method for reading improvement. Show your child how phrasing and expression helps with meaning. Encourage your child to read to you and/or siblings.
- Record your child reading and have him/her listen to him/herself. Does it sound like Mom or Dad might read it? What can he/she do to improve?
- Help your child choose a "just right" book. "Just right" means that the book can be read with roughly 95% accuracy. In a recreational sense, books should be "just right" to be sure your child will be successful and enjoy reading. Use the 5-finger test. As she/he reads a page, put up one finger for each word she/he doesn't know. If this happens on one page, it's too hard. Caution, this 5-finger test would show 95% accuracy with 100 words. The thing to remember is that if a child is having difficulty, it's best left for instructional purposes later (90-94% is the guideline for instructional books at school).

The Five Components of Reading

Reading with children and helping them practice specific reading components can dramatically improve their ability to read. Scientific research shows that there are five essential components of reading that children must be taught in order to learn to read. Adults can help children learn to be good readers by systematically practicing these five components:

Phonemic Awareness: Recognizing and using individual sounds to create words, or **phonemic awareness**. Children need to be taught to hear sounds in words and that words are made up of the smallest parts of sound, or phonemes.

Phonics: Understanding the relationships between written letters and spoken sounds, or **phonics**. Children need to be taught the sounds individual printed letters and groups of letters make. Knowing the relationships between letters and sounds helps children to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically, and "decode" new words.

Fluency: Developing the ability to read a text accurately and quickly, or **reading fluency**. Children must learn to read words rapidly and accurately in order to understand what is read. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. When fluent readers read aloud, they read effortlessly and with expression. Readers who are weak in fluency read slowly, word by word, focusing on decoding words instead of comprehending meaning.

Vocabulary: Learning the meaning and pronunciation of words, or **vocabulary development**. Children need to actively build and expand their knowledge of written and spoken words, what they mean and how they are used.

Comprehension: Acquiring strategies to understand, remember and communicate what is read, or **reading comprehension strategies**. Children need to be taught comprehension strategies, or the steps good readers use to make sure they understand text. Students who are in control of their own reading comprehension become purposeful, active readers.

Reading Comprehension Big 5

Comprehension is the umbrella for understanding all we have read. The following five items are explicitly taught each day. As you read with your child, please ask some of the questions noted below. It is an honor to partner with you to create amazing readers.

Prediction: Children use clues from the title, pictures, characters, text, and their own experiences with the topic to guess what will most likely happen next in the story. *What is this story about?*

Summarize: When you summarize you tell the most important details or events of a story or text, but you do not give all of the details of the original story. *Tell me about the beginning, middle and end.*

Context Clues: When you come to a word that you don't know use the information around the word to help you find out what it means. You can also use illustrations to help you figure out what the word means. *What information helps me to understand this word or passage?*

Main Idea: The main idea is what the passage, story, or paragraph is mainly about. It is the basic idea that the author wants the reader to understand. *Is this writing meant to inform? explain? persuade? or entertain?*

Questioning/Connection: *Do I understand what I read? What do I wonder about?*

Recommended Reading Websites

<http://www.starfall.com/>

Starfall.com opened in September of 2002 as a free public service to teach children to read with phonics. The systematic phonics approach, in conjunction with phonemic awareness practice, is perfect for kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. Starfall is an educational alternative to other entertainment choices for children.

<http://pbskids.org/lions/>

Looking for fun activities and games you can do with your kids throughout the day to help them learn to read and write? You'll find them here, along with recommended books and tips to get your kids wild about books and reading.

<http://www.funbrain.com/brain/ReadingBrain/ReadingBrain.html>

Since 1997, kids, teachers, librarians, and parents have enthusiastically turned to Funbrain for its free educational games, online books, and comics. Funbrain, created for kids age preschool through grade 8, offers more than 100 fun, interactive games that develop skills in math, reading, and literacy. Plus, kids can read a variety of popular books and comics on the site, including Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Amelia Writes Again, and Brewster Rocket.

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>

National Geographic Explorer For Kids is an online version of the award-winning magazine.

<http://www.jumpstart.com/>

JumpStart World of Learning is a revolutionary educational software solution that transforms math, reading and critical thinking lessons into adventures! In each of the 4 grade-based programs, students are invited to embark on a journey through JumpStart World – a personalized 3D environment that evolves as a student progresses. Along the way, students master dozens of skills based on state and national educational standards. Designed by educators and built with cutting edge interactive technology, JumpStart World of Learning is a powerful supplemental learning program that every early elementary classroom needs.

<http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com/>

Discovery Education offers free student resources that bring learning to life both inside and outside the classroom. We invite you to take a look at our interactive games, videos, contests, virtual labs and activities designed to help you dive deeper into a topic – and have fun too!

<http://www.bookadventure.com/>

Book Adventure is a FREE reading motivation program for children in grades K-8. Children create their own book lists from over 7,000 recommended titles, take multiple choice quizzes on the books they've read, and earn points and prizes for their literary successes. Book Adventure was created by and is maintained by Sylvan Learning.

<http://storynory.com/>

Storynory has published a new audio story every week since November 2005.