

Reading Aloud to children is the best way to help them learn to read and learn to appreciate reading and writing. It helps them learn new **vocabulary** and **grammar**, and fosters a positive attitude toward reading. Research shows that reading aloud to students actually improves their reading ability. Even though parents and teachers are more inclined to read aloud to younger students, older students benefit from being read aloud to, as well.

5 REASONS TO READ ALOUD

When you read out loud to your student, you...

- Model **Fluent** Reading
- Promote Enjoyment and Appreciation of Literature
- Develop Knowledge of **Vocabulary** and Concepts
- Motivate Independent Reading
- Develop a Bond Between You and Your Student

What to Do:

Before:

- Choose three stories you and your student might enjoy.
- Read the stories *before* your session.
- Let your student choose which of the stories you will read.
- Find a comfortable place to sit where you can both see the book.

During:

- Read the title of the book aloud to your student.
- Read the names of the author and the illustrator.
- Look at the cover and skim through the book quickly, noting pictures and other features of interest.
- Ask questions to find out what your student already knows about the topic and thinks you are going to read about.
- Read slowly, but don't talk down to your student.
- Vary the volume and the pitch of your voice.
- Act out parts of the story using voices, puppets, or props.
- When using predictable books, turn the **rhymes** or patterns into games – let your student guess what word, **rhyme**, or phrase is coming next.
- Encourage discussion and questions. Allow your student to interrupt you at any point along the way.
- Share personal thoughts with each other about the story.

- Offer additional information and explain key **vocabulary** when your student asks or when you think it is appropriate.
- Use your sense of humor – laugh a lot!

After:

- Ask your student questions about the story.
- Encourage your student to ask you questions about the story. (**This is a good time for you to model how to respond to questions. Feel free to say, “You know, I don’t remember. Let’s look back in the story and see if we can find the answer.”
- Let your student retell the story in his or her own words.
- Relate the story to real-life experiences.
- Share personal reactions with each other about likes and dislikes of the story and whether or not you would like to read another book by the same author.

CHOOSING CHILDREN’S BOOKS

- In most cases, your child’s teacher will provide books on the student’s reading level for each session. The child should be an active participant in choosing books he or she would like to read from among those provided.
- It is very important that the child feel successful at each session. If the chosen book is too difficult, choose another book to read before he or she becomes frustrated.
- You may wish to bring books to share with your student from time to time. In choosing books to share, the following information may be helpful:
 - Keep the child’s individual interests, skills, and characteristics in mind – children like to relate to characters, situations, and topics.
 - Look for books that present new ideas.
 - Variety is important – introduce different genres (nonfiction, poetry, folk tales, etc.).
 - Text and illustrations should depict cultures, families, genders, and abilities in positive ways.
 - Choose books with interesting language that stimulate the child to stretch for the **vocabulary** and meaning.
 - Talk to the child and teacher about books the child likes.

Children’s librarians are great sources of information as well, and can be consulted for suggestions on reading and book selections.

Adapted from PENCIL Foundation’s Reading Partner’s Guide, 2000; and The Reading Tutor’s Handbook by Jeanne Shay Schumm and Gerald E. Schumm, Jr. Free Spirit Publishing, 1999. www.freespirit.com