



ENGAGING YOUR STUDENT

Active Read Aloud:

- Before beginning a book, ask the child some questions to set the stage for the story. Provide any background information the child might need in order to appreciate the story. Invite the child to share experiences that you think will be central to the story.
- Have the child **predict** from the title, the picture, or the first page what the story is about.
- Always read the title of the book and author. Discuss the cover illustrations.
- Read with plenty of **expression**. Try to vary the tone of your voice when there is dialogue in the story, and vary the pace of your reading to reflect action in the story.
- **Read slowly** enough for your student to build mental pictures of what your student is hearing you read. Visual imagery is a strong contributor to good comprehension. Also, adjust your reading pace to fit the story's content, for example slowing down during suspenseful moments.
- While reading, stop occasionally and **ask questions**, have the child predict what will happen next, or discuss what has happened so far. Ask what the student would do in the same situation or how a character from the story would react in a different situation. Many children have difficulty listening for any sustained length of time, and pausing to ask questions or recall what you have read can help to keep them engaged. *See below for suggested questions.*
- **Be enthusiastic.** You are serving as a role model for just how exciting books and reading can be; students will catch on to this enthusiasm.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE READING

1. What do you think will happen next? Why?
2. Who is your favorite character in the reading? Why?
3. What do you think is the most exciting/interesting part of the reading?
4. Who would you recommend this book (poem/article/story) to? Why?
5. What would you like to ask the author if you met him or her?
6. What does the main character learn during the book? What did you learn?
7. How does the reading remind you of something in your own life?
8. If you were the main character, what would you do in the situation and why?
9. How is this reading like something else you have read?
10. If you are reading a picture book, talk about the details in the pictures and how they relate to the story. Are there clues to the story's content in the pictures?

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Give structure to your reading session.

- **Saying “no” is OK.** Volunteers should direct the reading time, providing clear expectations. Teachers repeatedly remind us that students respect and appreciate limits. If students ask to go outside, walk around, play games, or visit with friends, gently redirect them or speak with your School Coordinator for advice and assistance.
- **Slow down!** Reading too quickly is the most common mistake one can make when reading aloud. He recommends that you read slowly enough for the student to build mental pictures of what you are reading. Slow down enough for the children to see any pictures in the book without feeling hurried.
- **Set goals.** Discuss what you both want to achieve from the program. Write down your goals and refer back to them. This can give your child a sense of pride as well as build the skill of setting and meeting goals. Some examples include:
 - “Let’s try to read at least 10 books by Marc Brown this fall.”
 - “Let’s learn about two new animals.”
 - “I’d like to find a new favorite author and learn more about him/her.”
 - “Let’s read one of each genre over the next couple of months.”

Find a topic of interest to your student and think beyond books. Use your imagination and bring in a wide range of reading material. For example: If you and your student both like race cars, you can read non-fiction books (all or just sections) about cars or race-car drivers, articles in the newspaper sports section, and/or race-car magazines. Get creative!

Build self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and often. Celebrate milestones and goals met.



Learn more about your student and be respectful of his or her identity and preferences. Show interest in your student’s background and values. Learn how to pronounce and spell your student’s name and make sure he or she knows yours. Ask questions about favorite activities, family members, friends, hopes and dreams. By your words and actions, let your student know you care and respect any differences.

Change things up! You can always change books, stand up and stretch, take a breath.