



# Parents in the Know

## Focus on Reading

### Improving Your Child's Reading

There are many things you can do to help your child become a better reader.

1. Read aloud to your child daily. It doesn't matter if your child is two or twelve, studies show that reading aloud helps students' performance.
2. Provide a wide variety of reading materials. There should be books at your child's reading level throughout the house. Don't worry about the expense. Most libraries allow families to check out large quantities of books.
3. Establish a family reading time. Have a time each day when everyone reads silently. This shows the importance that everyone puts on reading.
4. Get in the habit of going to the library. Keep informed of local library programs also. Libraries often have wonderful programs for children and adolescents.
5. Stay informed. Speak with your child's teacher regularly and find out ways that you can support your child's progress at home.
6. Provide a variety of reading materials other than books. Consider checking out books on tape, reading software, and other materials available at your local library that help make reading fun!



Images provided by clipart.com

**Based on:** Peggy Gisler and Marge Eberts, "Top 10 Ways to Improve Reading Skills", Family Education, <http://school.familyeducation.com/top-10-ways/improve-reading-skills/38329.html>

## Book Making

**Accordion Book:** Get a long piece of paper (a large paper bag works well) and cut it into a long strip. Fold the pages back and forth like an accordion. Have your child write directly on the pages.

**Song Writing:** Have students rewrite familiar songs like "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" including lyrics based on things being studied.

**File Folder Stories:** After your child has written his story on one or several pieces of paper, have your child decorate the outside of a file folder with the title and cover illustration of his book. Put the stories in a box to begin a collection!

## Lois Lowry

Lois Lowry is the award winning author of over 30 children's books. She is the second of three children and credits that for her vivid imagination. While her younger brother spent time with her father, and her older sister spent time with her mother, she explored the world through literature.

Lois Lowry writes for a large audience, including books to be read by students from third to eighth grades. Included in her work are the award winning books: Number the Stars and The Giver. Her books focus on our interdependence on one another. She is the author of several series including the Anastasia series, Sam Krupnik series, Gooney Bird books, and books about the Tates.

You can learn more about Lois Lowry on her website at: [www.loislowry.com](http://www.loislowry.com).

## What Research Says



The National Reading Panel conducted a review of over 100,000 studies of reading research to determine what skills are essential to learning to read. They came up with a list often referred to as The Big Five.

**Phonemic Awareness:** Working with sounds

**Phonics:** Decoding words in order to read and spell

**Vocabulary**

**Fluency:** Reading quickly, accurately, and with expression

**Comprehension:** Not only being able to read the words, but understanding what is being read

**Based on:** Bonnie Armbruster, Fran Lehr, and Jean Osborn, "Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read", National Reading Panel, [http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading\\_first1.html](http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1.html)



# Focus on Reading

## Spelling Help

When your child is faced with spelling a word that she doesn't know, tell her to try the following strategy:

1. **Meaning:** Does the meaning of the word give you any clues about its spelling?
2. **Syllables:** Sound out the word by syllables and write down how to spell each syllable.
3. **Patterns:** Try different spelling patterns that might work if the word does not look correct.
4. **Similarity:** See if you know how to spell a similar word.

**Based on:** "Spelling Strategies", Department of Education, Tasmania, School Education Division,  
<http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/spellstrat.htm>



## Books for Parents

Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever, by Mem Fox

The Read Aloud Handbook, by Jim Trelease

Read to Me 2000: Raising Kids Who Love to Read, by Bernice E. Cullinan

*"The research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement." ~ Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wikeland*



## Newberry Award Winners

The Newberry award is given each year for a distinguished children's book. Some of the most recent winners include:

The Graveyard Book, by Neil Gaiman

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village, by Laura Amy Schlitz

The Higher Power of Lucky, by Susan Patron

Criss Cross, by Lynn Rae Perkins

Kira-Kira, by Cynthia Kadohata

The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, A Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread, by Kate DiCamillo

Crispin: The Cross of Lead, by Avi

A Single Shard, by Linda Sue Park

A Year Down Yonder, by Richard Peck

But, Not Buddy, Christopher Paul Curtis

Holes, by Louis Sachar

## Making Reading Special

There are many special things that you can do to get your child excited about reading:

- \* Let your child stay up an extra 15 minutes as long as he is reading.
- \* Go to the bookstore and buy a book as a reward for positive behavior.
- \* Have a family movie night. Rent the movie version of a chapter book that your child has just finished reading. Talk about how the book compares to the movie.
- \* Host a book club. Read a chapter book with your child and find time each week to discuss what you have read.
- \* Have a DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time each week. Keep the time a surprise.
- \* Plan a trip to a local museum. Before visiting, go to the library and check out books about things you will see. Have your child share what he has learned as you walk through the museum.
- \* Visit children's author's websites and encourage your child to write to his favorite authors. Many authors will write back!