



READING *Tips*

Welcome to the seventh addition of the Reading and Behavior Tips Newsletter created for families and caregivers of elementary students. Each month you will find activities, tools, and strategies gathered from educators and leaders in their fields that you can do at home with your child. Enjoy and have fun!

Reading:

We've been talking about helping children comprehend the stories they read. Here is a checklist you can use to help your child better understand the story they read.

Before Reading

- Look at the cover and pictures together
- Ask what the book might be about
- Connect the topic to something in real life
- Preview any tricky vocabulary or ideas

After Reading

- Identify the main idea or most important part
- Talk about characters' feelings or motivations
- Discuss the lesson or message
- Share what surprised them or what they liked
- Connect the story to something in their life

During Reading

(first read straight through, then reread, do the following)

- Pause occasionally to talk about what's happening
- Ask open ended questions (Why do you think...)
- Encourage predictions (What might happen next)
- Model thinking aloud (This part makes me wonder...)
- Check for understanding (Tell me what's going on so far)
- Notice new or interesting words

Daily Reading Habits

- Read together for 10–20 minutes
- Keep books accessible around the home
- Celebrate effort, not perfection
- Encourage curiosity and questions
- Let kids see you reading too

Comprehension Strategies

- Visualize the story like a movie
- Make connections (to self, world, or other books)
- Ask questions about characters, events, or facts
- Reread confusing parts
- Summarize a page or section in their own words



Behavior:

Does your child ever struggle to manage their feelings? Have you ever witnessed a tantrum? A meltdown? A blowup? Angry words? How can you help your child better deal with frustrations?

Some children feel things very intensely and quickly; they have a difficult time calming back down. When this happens, the brain is responding emotionally instead of rationally so we can't reason with them. There are ways to help them.

- Throughout the day, use words to describe your own feelings and model how you manage them.
- Validate your child's emotions and show them you are listening to them. Acceptance isn't the same thing as agreeing with them. It's letting your child feel understood.
- Validating your child's behavior doesn't mean giving attention. Try to ignore the bad behavior, sometimes turning away or physically leaving the area. And most importantly...as soon as your child is doing something right, be sure to turn the attention back on and provide praise for the new behavior.
- Be sure to provide lot of positive attention throughout the day when your child is learning a new way to deal with his/her emotions. Be excited for the little things.
- Rely on and continue to practice those expectations and routines we talked about in earlier newsletters.
- Take breaks when you know the situation will be frustrating or when you see frustration building. Movement breaks could be jumping jacks, running in place, hopping on one foot, and so on. Quiet breaks could be just sitting and taking big breaths, doodling, coloring, and so on. Why not try "Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes, Knees and Toes?" Try it fast, slow, like a 100-year-old would do it, with a whisper voice. The choices are endless!
- Provide choices when you know your child is going to have difficulty with a task or request. For example, "You can pick up your room now or we'll set a timer, and you can pick it up in 10 minutes." "You can take your bath first or you can brush your teeth first." They still need to do the task, but they can feel they have a little more control over the situation.
- If you know a situation will be frustrating, talk about it before it happens. Problem-solve together ways that your child can respond. You can even practice by role playing the event or situation. For example, "We are going to your friend's house. I know it is upsetting when we tell you it is time to leave. Let's practice what we'll do when it is time to leave." "You can play on your Nintendo Switch. I know it is frustrating when you must quit. How can we avoid that?"
- After an outburst and the child is calm again, talk about what happened. How did your child feel? Why did they feel that way? Talk about different choices that will work better next time. Practice those choices so they know what those reactions sound and feel like.

We appreciate your feedback

Please fill out this quick survey to help us meet your needs.

