

Dear Parents:

We realize how difficult it is to provide the right kind of support for your child at home. Therefore, we are providing you with what we believe to be the most important ways you can help your child, no matter their age. The following topics will be covered:

- Finding a “just right book”
- Word solving strategies
- Comprehension Strategies
- Recommended Reading list

## Finding a “Just Right” Book

95% of all reading your child does should be at their independent reading level, or “just right”. Knowing what makes a book “just right” is very important!

Here are some guidelines to determine “just right”:

“Just Right”	“Too Hard”
Can read MOST words without getting stuck	Gets stuck on MANY words on each page
Reads smoothly, with good rate (not too slow, not too fast)	Choppy, slow reading, reads word-by-word OR reads too fast
Can make meaning/understand all events and details easily	Can’t recall information read/no or little understanding
Has some background knowledge of the material in book	Has no background knowledge of material in book
Can make connections, ask questions, visualize, and interpret what’s happening	Cannot make connections, visualize events, or make deeper meaning

## Word Solving Strategies

Children need to have a series of strategies they can use when they come to a word they do not know. We don’t want students to rely on only “sounding out”. There are many other ways to figure out a tricky word. Try these prompts:

- ✓ **TRY IT**
- ✓ Use the first letter and get your mouth “ready” to say the word
- ✓ Check the picture
- ✓ Think about what makes sense
- ✓ Look for parts (or “chunks”) in the word that you know
- ✓ Read on and come back to it when you know more
- ✓ Sound it out in parts or syllables
- ✓ Think about another word you know that looks like this word
- ✓ **TRY IT AGAIN**

Celebrate any attempts even if your child is not successful. Say:

- ✓ I like the way you tried that out.
- ✓ I like the way you noticed that and fixed it yourself.
- ✓ You’re nearly right.
- ✓ What else do you know that will help?

## Supporting Comprehension Strategies

Think about why we read...to make meaning. We read for different purposes, but no matter why we read, we understand/comprehend. In fact, reading really is THINKING, otherwise it's just figuring out a bunch of letter and sound combinations. If we want our children to become lifelong readers, we must teach them how to think before, during and after reading. There are seven main strategies that good readers use to make meaning of written text. Below is listed the strategy and some prompts you can use to support your child's comprehension.

### 7 Keys to Comprehension

Comprehension Strategy	Prompt to Use to Support	Way it Might Sound
Making connections	What does this remind you of?	This character reminds me of my sister because... This part reminds me of when something like that happened to me.
Asking Questions	What are you wondering when you read this part?	I wonder why the character did that. I wonder what the author means by that.
Making Inferences	What do you think the author means here?	I infer that the character is funny because he did... I infer that it is cold there because the author said she could see her breath outside.
Visualizing	What do you see/hear/smell/taste/feel when you read this part?	I can really visualize the barn here because the author used such good description of it.
Determining Importance	What is the most important fact the author wanted to teach you? What is the most important part?	This part seems important to me because....
Synthesizing	What do you think this is mostly about? Why do you think the author wrote this?	This book was about friendship and the importance of good friends in life.
Self-Monitoring	When something doesn't make sense, go back and fix it. You could try re-reading that part or asking for help.	Something doesn't make sense here, so I will read that again.

### Top 5 Ways to Support Comprehension

1. Read TO your child!! (no matter how old they are)
2. Reading WITH your child:
  - ❖ Take turns
  - ❖ Read poetry or rhyme in unison
  - ❖ Read the same book and then get together to discuss it
3. Provide your child with time to read BY him/herself, making "just right" book choices
4. Model reading BY reading yourself (show your child that you read too)
5. TALK with your child about what they are reading (authentic conversation)
  - ❖ Encourage them to share their thinking with you
  - ❖ Use some of the prompts to support comprehension strategies
  - ❖ Discuss a book's themes and big ideas
  - ❖ Share with your child your own thinking while you read

## If Your Child Is Having Difficulty...

All children struggle with comprehension at some point. Just think about it...do we always understand everything we read? Probably not...depending on the book, its level of difficulty, how familiar you are with the content, whether you like it, or how distracted you are. There are some things you can do to help your child when they don't seem to be really making meaning.

If you see...	Then try...
<p>The book is too difficult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gets “stuck” on many of the words</li> <li>➤ Reads the words too slowly (one word at a time)</li> <li>➤ Asks for help with the reading</li> </ul>	<p>Selecting a book that is easier</p>
<p>The book is not interesting; they just don't seem to care about what they are reading</p>	<p>Get to know what types of books your child might want to read            Think about their interests (sports, animals, humor, mystery, space, dinosaurs)            Find a series or type of book your child likes and then stick with it            Go to the library and check out lots of different kinds of books to experiment until you find a genre they like            Don't limit their choices. YOU don't have to like it!</p>
<p>He/she can't seem to tell me anything about what he just read; he just doesn't seem to remember</p>	<p>Break the reading up into smaller parts; after a few sentences/a page/a chapter...ask him to tell you what is happening, who the characters are, etc. If he still can't tell you, work together to go back and re-read to find out.            BEFORE reading, sit with your child and talk about what the book might be about. Flip through the pages, read the back, discuss what you know about the book, topic, genre before reading DURING reading, engage in conversation about the book.            Reinforce the language of the comprehension strategies.</p>