



Supporting Literacy at Home

A Toolkit for Families

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Introduction

Welcome to **Supporting Literacy at Home: A Toolkit for Families**. We are thrilled to partner with you to support your child’s education. In this toolkit, we have gathered resources to help you support your child’s literacy development at home.

Within this toolkit, you will discover helpful information including:



How to Create a Reading Routine at Home



Tips for Listening to Your Child Read Aloud



How to Excite Your Child About Reading

Please remember that you are not alone. Your child’s school, teachers, and our entire educational community are here to support you every step of the way. We encourage you to explore this toolkit, ask questions, and engage with your child’s teacher and school.

Thank you for being committed to your child’s education. Together we can create a bright future filled with endless possibilities.



Supporting Literacy at Home

Supporting your child's reading and writing at home is important for your child's academic success. This support is not only about helping your child with schoolwork. Instead, literacy support helps your child become better at speaking and thinking as well as becoming a better reader and writer.

Literacy goes beyond reading and writing- it involves understanding, expressing thoughts, and exploring new ideas through words. When you engage with literacy activities together, you are helping your child unlock the wonders of books, improve their communication skills, and build confidence. This can include reading together, sharing stories, playing word games, and encouraging questions after reading. Every small effort adds up to building strong, curious, and skilled readers and writers in your family.

Take time to visit the [Family Reading Resources](#), available for free to all Tennessee families, to encourage at-home reading practice and to help young learners become stronger readers.



Creating a Read-Aloud Routine

Did you know that reading aloud is one of the most important activities that families can do to help their child become a stronger reader?

When children hear a story read to them out loud, they learn new words, learn about written language, and learn about the world around them. As you read aloud, your child adds words to their vocabulary which helps them when they begin reading. The more words they can use, the easier it will be for them to read and become a successful reader.

Creating a read aloud routine at home is a great way to make sure your child is on a path toward early reading success.

Below, you will find helpful ideas to create your own reading routine that works with your family's schedule.

- **Find a time each day** to read together. Building time into your routine will help your child see it as an important time of day.
- **Choose books** that your child would not be able to read on their own. You can also listen to audio books together.
- **Read with expression** and try using different voices for the characters or include sound effects. Be creative and have fun!
- **Select books** with interesting characters, exciting plots, and a rich vocabulary. You should stop and talk about words your child might not know.
- **Chat about the story** or ask questions while you are reading. You can talk about the book in English or your home language.
- **Ask your child** to retell what happened in the story. You can ask them questions about the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Your child can ask you questions about the story, too!



Tips for Listening to Your Child Read

Reading to your child every day is an important routine that will set your child on the path to early reading success. Once your child learns to read, build in time each day to listen to them read to you too.

Children who are learning to read practice by reading from decodable books. These books have specific sound-spelling patterns that are taught at school and include words that can be sounded out. Families can access free decodable books to practice reading at home using [Tennessee's Interactive Decodable Book Series](#) on Best for ALL Central.

As your child continues to grow as a reader, you may notice their books change with them. You will see books with more words on a page, fewer pictures, and harder vocabulary.

When your child reads to you, there could be times they have trouble, and you might be unsure of what to do.

Here you will find some helpful tips to keep in mind when your child reads to you at home.

- **Be patient.** Allow your child time to sound out a word if they get stuck instead of jumping in too quickly.
- **Encourage your child to keep trying.** Stay away from allowing your child to skip or guess words.
- **Gently correct mistakes.** When your child misses or skips a word, gently point out the letters or words they overlooked. Allow them the chance to fix it.
- **Focus on the letters and sounds when reading.** Avoid using pictures for help.
- **Guide your child through a word.** Point out the sounds in the beginning, middle, and end of the word. Have them use what they have learned about sounds and letters to break the word into parts they know.
- **Praise your child's efforts.** Learning to read takes time and practice.





At Home Support for Struggling Readers

Each child's reading journey is unique, and there may be times when extra efforts are needed from home. Read below to learn ways you can support your child's reading success.

S.I.M.P.L.E. Moments at Home *Reading with Riley the Raccoon*

S Sounds First Approach

I Inform

M Modeled Moments

P Play with Sounds

L Listen & Learn with Your Child

E Engage in Literacy Activities

#ReadLikeRiley



What can I do at home with my child to support their reading challenges?

- Read aloud to your child and listen to your child read to you each day.
- Talk about the story after reading together and help your child learn new vocabulary words.
- Encourage effort, not perfection, as they practice and show excitement for their progress.
- Choose books that interest your child.
- Stay in close contact with your child's teacher and request specific reading activities or ideas that will help your child.



At Home Ideas for Grade Level & Advanced Readers

Read below to learn ways you can encourage and support your child who reads on grade level or is considered an advanced reader.

What can I do at home with my child to support their on grade level or advanced reading skills?

- Encourage your child to think deeply about the storyline or characters.
- Ask your child questions that are thought-provoking and require more reflection about the story.
- Continue reading aloud to your child.
- Encourage your child to write about what they are reading.
- Introduce your child to different types of books such as mysteries or books about people and places from far away.



How to Excite Your Child About Reading

As parents, fostering a love for reading in our children is one of the most valuable gifts we can offer. Not only does reading expand their knowledge and understanding of the world around them, but it also enhances their imagination and language skills.

Encouraging a passion for reading from an early age sets a strong foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. In today's information-driven world, being a good reader is essential for navigating life with confidence. Therefore, it is essential for us to instill in our children the joy and excitement that comes from diving into a good book, unlocking endless opportunities for growth and discovery.



Riley's Top 5 Reading Tips for Families

- 1** Read with kids early and often.
- 2** Keep books, magazines, comics, and other reading materials around.
- 3** Let kids read at their own pace and pick the books they're comfortable with and interested in.
- 4** Keep reading aloud with kids, even when you think they've outgrown it.
- 5** Commit to a special reading time.





Show your child that you like reading too.

The same way we model good behavior like saying please and thank you or eating healthy foods, we need to model reading as something we do for fun. Make sure your child sees you read!



Bring characters to life with hands-on activities and experiences.

Dress-up like a favorite character and act out some scenes in the book. Take out markers and crayons and draw scenes from their favorite books. If you are reading a book about dinosaurs, check out the local museum of natural history. If you are learning about fish, visit a nearby aquarium.



Read a series. Once children like the first book in a series, they get excited to read the rest of the series. Before they know it, they have read several books!



Start a book/movie challenge. So many books are made into movies. Once you are finished reading a book together, have a family night, and watch the movie together as a special treat. Compare the book to the movie and discuss the differences or what parts were the same. Or if your young reader enjoys a certain movie, finding books that involve those characters could be a way to get them interested in reading more.

No-Cost Family Literacy Activities

The information below provides some fun and free family literacy activities you can build into your family's routine to support your child's literacy growth.

Reading and Writing Together

- Read a book (or a chapter) together every day.
- Practice reading the same words and stories over and over to build fluency.
- Write a letter to a family member. This can be a letter you send in the mail or an email. Encourage your family members to write back to keep this writing practice going.
- Start a shared family journal where every member writes or draws something each day or once each week. This can be a record of thoughts, experiences, or even made-up stories, and will become a family treasure.



Glossary

This glossary contains terms found in **Supporting Literacy at Home: A Toolkit for Families** from the Tennessee Department of Education.

Audiobooks. Books read aloud by a storyteller and recorded for the listener to hear and sometimes follow along with as they read.

Decodable book. A special kind of book that helps kids learn to read. In these books, the words are made up of the letters and sounds that kids are learning in their reading lessons.

Read-aloud. A story or text read out loud by a teacher for students to listen to. Read-alouds are important models of fluent reading and expose students to the structure of language and knowledge and concepts in texts that students may not yet be able to read on their own.

Reading comprehension. The ability to understand and make sense of what is being read.

Sound-spelling patterns. The patterns of letters commonly used to make certain sounds. For example, the long -a sound as in game can be made with multiple spelling patterns, such as: a_e, as in game; -ay, as in say; -eigh, as in weigh; and -ai as in paid, among others.

Vocabulary. Understanding the meaning of words that are said aloud, read, or written.

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