

Summer Family Literacy Project - FAQs

What if I have a child who hates to read?

We recognize that fact. Some experts say that those students who say they hate to read just have not been introduced to the right book yet! Reading is not every student's favorite thing to do, and we have not trained our students to be active academically in the summer months. Therefore, it is our hope that by working in partnership with parents this summer, our reluctant readers will become active readers who develop a "taste" for reading!

How can I, the parent, help?

Be involved. Some suggestions:

- Read the books *with* your child,
- Read aloud *to* your child,
- Have your child read to you,
- Read independently of one another and race to see who wins on the number of chapters read in a particular day.

Help! I need more ideas!

- Start a "Book Club." For example, gather a group of students in your child's class, assign five chapters a week or one picture book, and every week get together with refreshments to discuss the book.
- To spark interest in a sluggish reader, try to find the book in graphic novel format, (the public library has many classics in graphic novel format) or rent an accompanying movie. (A caution with these techniques—make sure you and your student then reads the book as well. A graphic novel or movie **does not** take the place of the experience with the original text.)
- When on long road trips in the summer, rent or purchase the book on audio and listen in the car as a family. The public library has a large selection of audiobooks, so does Hastings, and if you have an eReader, you will have a wide access to audiobooks as well.

The best thing to do to help your child is to be their cheerleader. Positive words and positive beliefs in their abilities are the greatest motivators.

How about if we watch the movie based on a recommended title?

Watching the movie AFTER reading the book would be fine. Watching a movie version is NO substitute for reading or listening to the actual text of a book.

Not all students read on grade level. How do we know the difficulty (the readability) of the books on the list?

In these days of technology – easy Internet access – you can type in a search for readability level. For example: you want to know how difficult *Charlotte's Web* is? Type in “Charlotte’s Web readability level” and you will get that information, as well as the interest level.

What if we’re standing at the bookshelf in the library, and we want to know the level immediately?

Use the old-fashioned pre-technology strategy – the “Five Finger Rule” for choosing the book that’s just right. Here are the details:

1. Open to a page of the book.
2. Begin reading.
3. Each time you come to a word you don’t know, hold up one finger.
4. After you finish reading the page, check to see how many fingers you are holding up.
 - Too easy: 0-1 fingers
 - Just right: 2-3 fingers
 - Too hard: 4-5 fingers

What happens when my child is reading to me and comes to a word she or he can’t pronounce/doesn’t recognize? I know there must be a teacher’s trick that goes beyond “Sound it out.” And, I don’t like just telling the word.

Glad you asked! Is the child reading a “just right” book? If the book is too difficult (See Five Finger Rule), then that title should be abandoned, or be read aloud to your child.

For “just right” books, teachers use several strategies. Here is one that we like to share with parents. When a child comes to an unknown word, you (the listener), follow these steps:

1. Wait. When a child recognizes her own confusion, she will often pause, and then solve the unknown word herself.
2. If the reader is stumbling and unable to go on, say, “Cover that word. Keep reading until the stop mark (period or whichever mark is there). Now rerun the sentence.”
3. Still no luck? Say “Look at the word. Does it say, ‘xxxx’ or ‘xxxx’?” Of course one of your two clues should be the actual word! When you give those clues,

then your child can use the phonics strategies that should be in place. If the book is “just right”, your child is also using context clues – something that great readers everywhere use, in combination with their other word-solving strategies.

4. Finally, the child should rerun the sentence, because all that stop-time causes comprehension loss.

Are all of these books available – in print?

To the best of our knowledge, they are in print. We researched this, to make sure. The Clovis Carver Public Library has most of the titles, either in traditional hardcover or paperback format, or eBooks to check out to read on your electronic device. Many of them are classics; you may want to buy them for your family’s permanent collection! Or, trade books with other readers – to share!

If you have more questions, please feel free to contact us by email or phone (lclayton@cloviseagles.com or 935-2279).