

How can I help my young child learn to read?

Research shows that students who read at grade level by 3rd grade have much better chances at succeeding in later years. For example, if your child has not learned the sounds that letters make by the end of kindergarten, he may go on to struggle and become a poor reader. This sheet walks you through some of the most important ways you can help your child learn to read well by 3rd grade.



1. Help your child practice the alphabet.

Practice the sounds each letter and combinations of letters make. This seems like a simple skill, but research shows that building *phonemic awareness*, or a student's ability to notice individual sounds in words, is one of the most important things you can do to prepare your child to read well. To help your child practice noticing the sounds that letters make, you can make flash cards with letters using index cards or buy ready-made flash cards.

2. Help your child practice reading common words.

Ask the teacher for a list of common words for your child's grade level, and create flash cards to help him read those words with speed.

3. Encourage your child to read on her own 20 minutes each day.

If your child can easily recognize 95% of the words on a page, she will have an easier time reading fluently and understanding what's on the page. This takes practice, so encourage your child to read every day from a book that is not difficult for her.

4. Help your child learn new vocabulary words.

Younger children need to learn the meanings of several thousand words each year! Children learn new words by reading them in books, by hearing them read aloud. So it is important to also read to your child.



5. Build excitement about reading.

Reading the newspaper or books, visiting the library, bookstore, watching book-related television shows (for example, Electric Company, Sesame Street) and visiting book fairs (for example, Los Angeles Times Festival of Books) with your child are ways to show your child that reading is fun and important.

6. Identify and help remedy reading problems.

If your child is having problems learning to read, it is important that you reach out for help before he moves too far out of 3rd grade. There are many online resources to help struggling readers. For example, Reading Rockets <http://www.readingrockets.org/> has videos, podcasts, links to resources to get help in English and Spanish, and lots of other good information for working with your young reader.



Are the third graders at my school reading and writing at grade level?

The School Report Card tells you how many of the students in 3rd grade are doing well in English language arts. Notice how the students in your school are doing compared to last year, compared to the LAUSD as a whole.

Look for how 3rd graders at your school did on the CST on the Progress page (page 1) of the School Report Card.

Research shows that students who are reading at grade level by the 3rd grade have much better chances at success in middle school and high school.

3rd graders scoring proficient or advanced in English language arts



For more information, contact the School Report Card at (213) 241-5600 or reportcard@lausd.net.