

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Celebrate 2025 with literacy resolutions

A new calendar year is the perfect time to help your child set new reading and writing goals. By setting achievable goals, you can inspire your child to become a more confident and enthusiastic reader and writer.

Your child could:

- **Read more.** Your child could aim to read one book each week or each month. If your child is already an avid reader, suggest reading a new genre each month.
- **Write more.** Ask your child to set aside time each day for some writing. Your child could write a poem, a letter, an entry in a journal—or anything else.
- **Learn more.** Challenge your child to learn (and use) one new word a day. Use a word-of-the-day app or select words that are relevant to your child's interests. By the end of the year, your child will know at least 365 new words.



Strengthen your child's reading fluency

Reading fluency is the ability to read text with accuracy, speed and expression. It involves reading words smoothly and understanding the meaning of the text.

To increase your elementary schooler's reading fluency:

- **Encourage your child to reread** books out loud so words become more familiar.
- **Don't correct incorrect words** immediately. Ask if the word made sense when your child read it in the passage. Then, look at it again together.
- **Find books that are a little more advanced** and read them to your child. The exposure to more difficult vocabulary will help your child build fluency. You can also try listening to audiobooks together.

Reading aloud has endless benefits

There are so many reasons to read aloud to your child—even if your child can already read beautifully! Reading aloud:

- **Reminds** your child how pleasant reading can be.
- **Improves** vocabulary and listening skills.
- **Helps** your child enjoy new literature.
- **Gives** you and your child chances to discuss stories and how they relate to real life.



Go to the library—online!

If you haven't visited your local library's website lately, take a look. You might be surprised by what's there.



Many libraries offer free online services. You may find book lists, free digital books, free audiobooks to download, information on upcoming events and more.

Have fun with collage poetry

Challenge your child to create a collage poem. Have your child:

1. **Cut out a variety of words** and phrases from junk mail and old magazines.
2. **Arrange the words** into a poem and glue them onto a separate piece of paper. Remember: Poems do not have to rhyme.
3. **Read the poem aloud.**



Next, ask about your child's inspiration: "Why did you choose to arrange the words and phrases as you did?"

Play with synonyms and antonyms

In elementary school, your child will learn about *synonyms* (words with the same meaning) and *antonyms* (words with opposite meanings). Challenge your child to practice using them with this game. All you need is one sheet of paper per player, some pencils and your brains.

- 1. Together, pick a word** that you both know that has several synonyms and antonyms (such as *good*).
- 2. Write down as many synonyms** for the word as you can think of in one minute (*great, wonderful, marvelous*).
- 3. Flip your paper over.** Write as many antonyms as you can think of in a minute (*bad, terrible, horrible*).
- 4. Whoever has the most words** written down wins and gets to pick the next word.



Encourage the writing process step by step

When authors write a story, they rarely finish their work in one sitting. Strong writing involves a process. Help your child follow these steps:

- 1. Brainstorm.** It can be fun to think of things to write about. Listen to your child's ideas.
- 2. Draft.** At first, your child should just write, without worrying about mistakes.
- 3. Revise.** Have your child read the story aloud. Ask questions if there is anything that confuses you so your child can make changes.
- 4. Edit.** Have your child check for spelling and punctuation errors.
- 5. Celebrate.** Read the final product together and praise your child's effort.



Q: Playing video games is my child's favorite activity. How can I get my child to spend more time reading instead?

A: It can be difficult to motivate some kids to read—especially when there are so many entertainment options available. Place limits on recreational screen time. Keep irresistible reading materials around the

house. Many young readers love magazines and graphic novels. Look for materials based on your child's favorite shows or games.

Make your own greeting cards!

Making cards boosts creativity and involves reading and writing. Together, make a list of birthdays, holidays and other events.

Then, ask your child to create a special card for each by decorating the front of a folded sheet of paper and writing a short message inside.



For lower elementary readers:

- ***Tía Isa Wants a Car*** by Meg Medina. Tía Isa decides that she wants a car—but that doesn't fit into the family's priorities. One family member works to help her aunt achieve her dream.
- ***The Obstinate Pen*** by Frank W. Dormer. Uncle Flood gets a new pen—that has a mind of its own! No matter what he writes, the pen writes something else.

For upper elementary readers:

- ***Worse Things Happen at Sea!*** by Alan Snow. Step aboard the Nautical Laundry, a ship run by rats who embark on a silly adventure.
- ***Daredevil: The Daring Life of Betty Skelton*** by Meghan McCarthy. Betty Skelton was one of the first women in aviation. Learn about her fascinating life, from the records she set to her time training with the NASA Mercury 7 team.



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