



Issue Five

Supporting Early Learners

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Partners in Learning

Dear Parents,

Children have the best possible chance to reach their full potential when educators and parents work as partners to provide supportive learning environments. These newsletters have been written by Bev DeMonyé and Gloria Gustafson for parents wanting to help their children at home. You are welcome to email us at learningtoread@telus.net or visit our website www.readwritewithkids.com to view other resources.

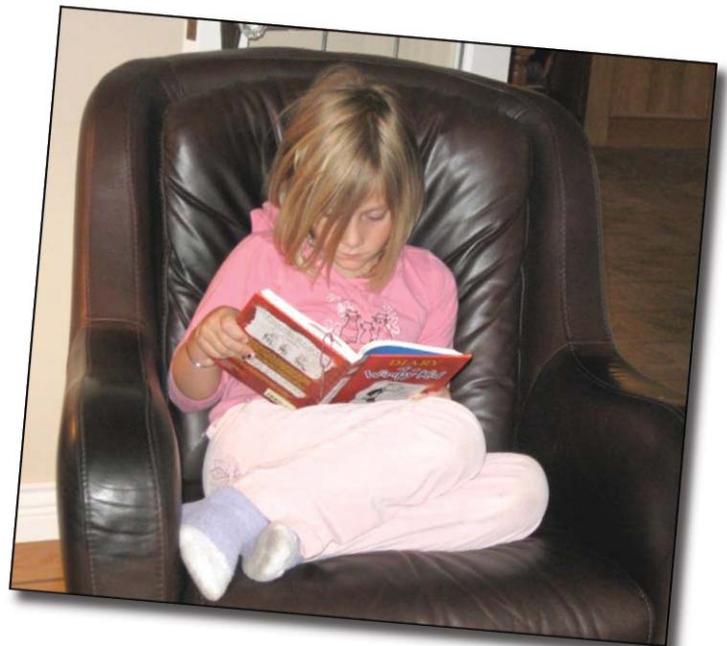
Understanding and Learning From Reading

Reading comprehension is a developmental process. It begins from the time very young children notice print around them and continues as they learn to read. In fact, reading comprehension is a life-long skill and applies to: story books, information books, nursery rhyme books, magazines, electronic text, graphic literature such as comic books and cartoons, environmental print such as street signs and other print we use in our daily lives. Comprehension and understanding of text is the foundation of enjoying and learning from what we read. You can help your child develop reading comprehension using the suggestions on the following page.

When I read on my own I can:

- make connections and predictions
- ask questions
- use self talk
- visualize or make mental pictures

This helps me to enjoy reading more and it helps me to understand what I am reading.



Before Reading discussions and questions motivate and orient children to the story or topic. This stimulates the process of bringing to mind what they already know and have experienced. Suggestions include:

- Discuss organizational features such as: title, cover picture and table of contents. Have your child predict what the story might be about or what they might learn.
- Take a 'picture walk' through the book before reading. This is simply looking at and discussing pictures, diagrams, headings and captions to get an idea of the plot or information.
- Watch for unusual phrases or words and help your child understand them ahead of time.
- Tell your child why you chose a particular book to read to them. It might be because the story book has a theme such as 'sharing' and you want to discuss sharing with your child. Or it might be an information book about something you know your child is currently interested in. This demonstrates to children that we often have a purpose when we choose books.

During Reading discussions and questions offer opportunities to explain, expand and focus the reading experience as you go. A common question parents ask is: *How often should I stop during a read-aloud?* Our best advice is to make sure your child knows it is okay to ask you to stop and explain words or something they find confusing. We find that sometimes children want to just listen to the story for enjoyment. At other times, they want to stop and discuss and discuss and discuss! Do what works best for you and your child. At first you can take the lead and make comments or ask questions. You will be surprised at how quickly your child will get the idea and start making their own comments and asking their own questions. Prompts include:

- *This is an unusual word. Do you know what it means?*
- *If I read the sentence again can you guess what this word means?*
- *This part is confusing. What do you think the author means by this?*
- *This is an interesting fact. I didn't know this.*
- *Why don't you close your eyes while I read and tell me what pictures you see in your head?*
- *Does this remind you of something, or someone, a past experience, another book or a movie you have seen?*
- *What do you think will happen next? or How do you think the story will end?*
- *I wonder about . . . or This makes me feel . . .*

After Reading discussions are an opportunity to reflect and respond to what was been read. What do you want to take away and remember? Has it changed the way you think? Do you want to learn more? Prompts include:

- *If you had been the author how would you have ended the story?*
- *Would you have solved the problem in the same way?*
- *Has this ever happened to you? What other connections can you make?*
- *What was your favourite part? Why?*
- *What was the most important or most interesting thing you learned?*
- *Can you tell me how this story began, what happened in the middle, and how it ended?*
- *Would you like to learn more about this?*