

Tips on Talking to Parents About Reading



When parents are engaged, everyone wins.

Research shows that children whose parents are involved in their education are likely to have higher academic achievement and better behavior and social skills. Building relationships with parents is an important part of a teacher's role—and particularly with regards to reading. Here are tips and ideas to help engage parents in their child's reading.



Why the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act and reading by the end of third grade are important.

Parents likely know that reading is important for all young children. However, they may not know about the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, what it means for their child, and the importance of reading on grade level by the end of third grade. Here are some talking points to help start the conversation.

- » The Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, in conjunction with the NebraskaREADS initiative, helps all students become strong readers. It's a statewide effort that focuses on high quality literacy instruction and early identification of students in kindergarten through third grade who may have difficulty reading and providing them with the supports they need to improve their reading skills.
- » The main goal of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act is to give students the high-quality supports they need to become grade level readers. If a student is identified as having a reading difficulty, teachers and school staff will provide additional resources and supports to help them improve their reading skills.
- » Reading on grade-level by the end of third grade is an important milestone for every student. Starting fourth grade with strong reading skills helps students read independently and understand complex concepts in all subject areas.
- » As teachers, we want to work closely with parents to make reading a 24/7 activity. We'll help you find books, activities, and fun ways to make reading a part of your everyday routine.

Parents can support their child at home by encouraging them to read.



How to help parents become your partners.

The best way to engage parents as trusted partners in their child's reading is to help them support reading at home. Share with them some tips to help them improve their child's reading skills at home—and to feel empowered as a part of their child's academic success.

Some at-home reading tips include:

- » **Read something every day.** Reading together for at least 20 minutes every day can help your child become a strong reader.
- » **Have children lead their own story time.** When children read aloud, they are better able to learn sounds that letters make and sound out new words. Encourage them to practice reading aloud by having them host story time for your family pet or their favorite stuffed animal.
- » **Ask a teacher or librarian to help choose the right books.** Make sure the books your child is reading match their interests and are at just the right level—not too hard and not too easy.
- » **Visit the library often.** Many libraries host family events such as story time, book clubs, and author meet-and-greets, and provide resources.
- » **Find reading opportunities in everyday activities.** Reading is involved in many of your daily routines—you just might not realize it! Encourage your child to read street and store signs, directions on the GPS, or recipes while making dinner.
- » **Have your child write.** Writing grocery lists, flashcards, or letters to family members and friends helps children connect spoken words to written words.
- » **Pick a word of the day.** Select a common word, such as "open" or "juice," and make it your family's word of the day. Have each member look for it when they're out and about, reading, or watching television, and then have everyone share where they saw the word throughout the day.
- » **Use refrigerator magnets to practice spelling.** Spelling and reading go hand-in-hand. Stick a set of alphabet magnets to your fridge and have your child spell out words.
- » **Be a reading role model.** Children often copy the things they see the adults around them doing. Take time to read for yourself each day, and talk to your child about your favorite books, authors, and stories.

Explain the process of how struggling readers are identified and supported.

When a parent learns that their child may have a reading difficulty, it can be an overwhelming experience. As a trusted partner in their child's education, help parents better understand what to expect by explaining how the process works—and assuring you'll be by their side every step of the way.

How Struggling Readers are Identified and Supported

- » **Students are assessed.** Within the first 30 days of school, schools assess students in kindergarten through third grade to identify those who may struggle with early reading skills.
- » **Parents are notified.** Parents of students who are not reading on grade level are notified in writing within 15 days after identification and are given strategies and tools to support reading at home.
- » **Schools provide supports.** Any student who is identified as having a reading difficulty is immediately given intensive reading instruction and other specialized supports, including Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs), Supplemental Reading Intervention Programs, and Summer Reading Programs.
- » **Teachers monitor progress.** Students take a total of three assessments throughout the year, in addition to other formative assessments, to keep teachers, schools, and parents up to date on reading progress.