



Growing readers!

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“What’s This About?” Reading for Meaning with Your Child

Reading with comprehension means understanding what’s been read. It takes practice, time, and patience to develop reading comprehension skills. Families can play an important role in helping a child learn to read for understanding.

First, make sure your child is reading **books appropriate for their reading level**. If a book is too hard, all your child’s energy will be put into decoding and reading word for word, with less energy available to figure out what the book means. Books that your child can read with 98-100% accuracy are good choices for comprehension building.

Reading comprehension skills can be developed using a **before-during-after approach**. Below are a few suggestions that will help build comprehension skills.

Before

Your goal is to help your child build an understanding of and purpose for what they’re about to read. Look at the book’s cover. Ask, “What do you think this book might be about? Why? Can you make some predictions?” Guide your child through the pages, discuss the pictures, and brainstorm what might happen in the story. Talk about any personal experiences your child may have that relate to the story.

During

Your goal is to help your child be an active reader. Read together and talk about what’s happening as they’re reading. Stop and discuss any interesting or tricky vocabulary words. Talk about any surprising or sad passages, and help them visualize parts of the story. Ask your child, “Do you understand what’s happening here? What do you think will happen next?” If your child seems unsure, stop, go back and reread if necessary. Discuss any confusing parts.

After

Your goal is to help your child reflect on what they’ve read. Summarize and share your favorite part of the book. Have your child rate the book on a scale from 1 to 10 and say why. Have your child reread their favorite part or act it out.

Take the extra time before and during reading to read with your child this way. You’ll soon find yourself reading with a child who is motivated to comprehend and learn from everything they read.

Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.

