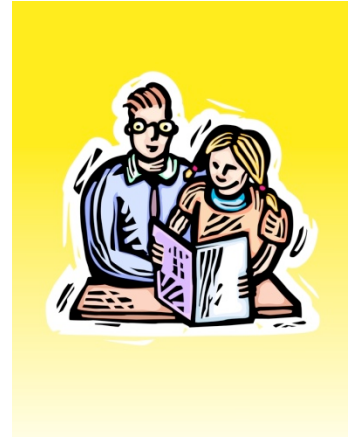


## Tips to encourage reading as a family

Strategies for parents to foster literacy skills in their children and strengthen their own literacy skills along the way:

- Ensure your child knows that how well they read or write has nothing to do with their intelligence. Every person is intelligent in their own way and each person is unique and needs to learn in the way that best suits them. With practice, your child will become a good reader.
- The television can be used as a tool. After your child watches a television show or an episode, talk to them about it. Ask them questions like, “What was your favourite part?” or “What was the episode trying to teach the audience?” This reinforces media literacy skills, a medium that is encompassing our lives today.
- Don’t lose sight of the fact that children model behaviour they see. Ensure that your child sees you reading, whether it’s the newspaper, the mail or a recipe. This shows your child how important it is to read.
- While reading a story to your child, pause to ask them what they predict will happen next or have them summarize what has happened in the story thus far. Good readers think about what they are reading and this will reinforce critical thinking skills.
- Today’s children, particularly teens, are influenced by music. Have your child read the lyrics to their favourite song. When your child hears the song, they will visualize the lyrics they read. Visualization is a reading skill and this helps develop the skill.
- All reading is good reading. If your child is a reluctant reader, allow them to read comics, a graphic novel, a magazine or an instruction manual for their favourite sport. They will be introduced to new words, sentence structure, and they will engage their brains with new ideas and information.



- When you are in the mall, grocery store or out for a walk, have your child read signs, posters and flyers. This will enhance their reading skills and teach them to be an active and engaged consumer.
- Families that spend a lot of time in the car can play an audio book and have children follow along with the written book in their hands. You will be surprised how many pages your child can get through in a five-minute car ride. Many libraries have a large collection of audio books.



- Have your child help you make dinner by reading a recipe card. Making them feel like your helper will arm your child with confidence.
- Play board games that involve making words or reading instructions on cards. This highlights to your child that literacy skills connect with everyday activities and reading is fun.
- Watch a movie based on a book. This can inspire your child to read the book because they enjoyed the movie so much. To really enhance critical literacy skills, have your child identify the key differences between the movie and the book.
- The reading process needs to be enjoyable so select books that represent your child’s reading ability and not the reading level your child “should” be at. If your child feels like every time they read, they are going to fail or be criticized, they will resist reading.
- Reading aloud helps children develop pace and voice. Have your child read to the family dog, teddy bear or their younger sibling. These are nonthreatening audiences that will help develop your child’s confidence.

Developing literacy skills is a task that requires a lot of patience from the parents and the literacy learner. As such, making the process enjoyable for everyone involved can go a long way in alleviating anxiety and opening the doors to developing lifelong literacy skills.