

Making the Most out of Your Read Alouds

Whether at home, in the lap of a parent, or on a rug listening to a favorite teacher, the joy of having someone read to you is not easily forgotten.

Research has consistently shown that simply reading aloud to children helps them build valuable comprehension skills. Until students reach their late middle school years, listening comprehension skills exceed reading comprehension.

Listening comprehension is an important skill for children to develop in their early years of literacy training. Listening comprehension skills enable students to:

1. Enjoy books and develop a positive association with reading.
2. Develop and practice listening comprehension skills.
3. Enable students to understand more challenging and complex texts.
4. Practice critical thinking skills.
5. Build vocabulary and background knowledge.

DIY Instructions for Reading Aloud with a Child:

At Reading Partners each tutoring session begins with a 10 minute read aloud where the volunteer tutor reads to their student. Here are some simple instructions to help guide a fun and productive read aloud session at home.

1. **Pick a Book:** Let the child choose the book from a selection of books ranging in genre and topics. Present a selection that will challenge their listening skills.
2. **Before You Even Start Reading:** Briefly introduce the book and set a purpose for the read aloud with the child before you start reading. Tailor the purpose to each individual book.
3. **Make it Interactive:** Ask questions, discuss the book with the child by asking comprehension questions during the read aloud. These questions encourage children to think carefully about texts and provide evidence for their thinking. In addition, discuss one or two vocabulary words and review over the next several weeks until the child knows it.
4. **Bring it Full Circle:** End with a question or prompt to bring the child back to the purpose set before reading. This allows students to consolidate their thinking and share what they have learned while reading.

Whether a tutor, parent, teacher, family member, or friend, by reading aloud to a child you are making a positive impact on his/her reading skills, education, and life.