

Reaching for Reading

An HCPS Literacy Resource for Parents

Viewing Guide

Hi, Parents!

Congratulations on your child's start in Kindergarten! Kinder parents frequently ask us, "What can I do to best prepare my child for a good start in school?" One answer? Read with her! But how?

The enclosed DVD is meant to help you to:

- *Understand what Kindergarten students will be expected to know about books and reading,*
- *Learn some strategies to use while you're reading with your child*
- *See that reading with your child can be even better when you talk to him about what he's reading*

Use this resource and help your child to be prepared for school! We know that success in Kindergarten these days is so important (maybe more than ever), and that Kinder students are asked to do so much more than was the case in the past—but—please remember what Isaac says in "Real Parents", "Just have fun with the books and with your kids!" Despite the academic focus of this video, perhaps the MOST important thing that parents can do for their kids when it comes to reading is to help them to love books and reading, which just so happens to be the subject of our first video!

*Shannon Marlowe,
Director of Elementary Education and Title I*

Why I Like Books and Reading

Parents might want to begin with this video, which introduces us to the topic of books and reading through the eyes of our children. It's adorable! Among other things, you'll learn that what's fiction and non-fiction isn't always what we adults think it is!

Step One: Print Concepts

Watch this video next. In this segment, teachers explain what the foundations to reading are and how Kindergarten students in school are asked to demonstrate that they know them. Also included are examples, inserted in-between the teacher stuff, that show students and parents practicing these concepts.

Activities you can do with your child:

- Have her show you how to hold the book
- Ask him to point to the title, front and back cover
- Have him point to and talk about the pictures
- Ask her to point to where we start to read and where we go next, when we finish a line of text and when we finish the page
- Help him to point out letters, words, capital and lower case letters, or even a sentence.
- Talk about the different marks of punctuation and how they change what we're reading

Step Two: Reading Behaviors

This video is a close cousin of Step One: Print Concepts. In this segment, teachers explain what Reading Behaviors are and how students in school must demonstrate their understanding of them. Examples are included here, too. Viewers will see students identifying the front cover and the back cover, using pictures as clues to words and meaning, "framing" letters, words and sentences, and pointing to where to start reading, among other things.

Activities you can do with your child:

- Ask him to point to the words while you read
- Talk about what authors and illustrators do
- Tell him what we do (pause, change our voice, etc) when we get to marks of punctuation
- Encourage your child to follow along with you, looking at the pictures and words (from left to right) as you or she reads
- Encourage her to find letters, words or names that she knows in the books you're reading
- Have him tell what's going on in the story by using the pictures

Real Parents, Real Students, Real Rewards

This segment continues the series by describing the start of reading comprehension. In school, "retelling" of stories (fiction) and "informational text" (nonfiction) takes place after stories and informational text are read to students and later, after books are read by students independently. While sometimes "reading comprehension" can sound intimidating, we find that reading books with kids and talking with them about what has happened or might happen next is natural to parents, crucial to student development, and a rewarding way for families to interact.

Activities you can do with your child:

- If you're reading a story, ask him to tell you who the characters are and/or where the story takes place
- After reading, ask her to talk about what happened in the beginning, the middle and the end of the story
- If you're reading non-fiction (informational text), ask her to tell you what the topic of the book is and something that she learned about it
- Whether you are reading a story or informational text, it is okay, even important to look back through the book, finding pictures and words, that help young students remember and talk about the book
- Ask your child why things happen in the story, to predict what might happen next, or to say what they would do, if they were in the story.

Not for Kids: A Roundtable Discussion about Kindergarten Literacy

If you're brave enough, check out this last video to hear additional advice from our experts, including one of our most experienced and most knowledgeable principals. Slower (and certainly drier), this segment is meant to frame the individual videos within a larger picture, to address parent fears about the reading assessments used in elementary school and to provide some over-arching signposts for parents, as they and their children move through the summer prior to Kindergarten. Enjoy—we dare you!