



Issue Two

# Supporting Early Learners

published by

**Partners in Learning**

## Dear Parents,

Children have the best possible chance to reach their full potential when educators and parents work as partners to provide supportive learning environments. These newsletters have been written by Bev DeMonyé and Gloria Gustafson for parents wanting to help their children at home. You are welcome to email us at [learningtoread@telus.net](mailto:learningtoread@telus.net) or visit our website [www.readwritewithkids.com](http://www.readwritewithkids.com) to view other resources.

## Reading With Children As They Learn To Read

When children start learning to read, they benefit from reading out loud to parents. Ten to twenty minutes a day provides amazing results when help and support is one-on-one! This can:

- promote a sense of partnership between you and your child
- provide the necessary practice for your child to develop confidence and move forward in reading
- stretch your child's reading skills
- motivate your child to take on new reading challenges
- inspire a life-long love for reading



## Tips for Supporting Children When They Read Out Loud to You

- Be encouraging, supportive and celebrate your child's reading successes.
- Short, enjoyable reading sessions are far better than overdoing it and risking a struggle or creating a negative experience.
- Some children like to read to themselves or to a favourite stuffy or toy before reading out loud to a parent. This helps to relieve the pressure of a performance situation.
- Readers use a combination of phonics or sounding out, clues from pictures and other words they have already read. They also use their own background knowledge to figure out words they don't know. You can support your child by making the following suggestions:
  - *look at the pictures and make a good guess at the word*
  - *try sounding out the word*
  - *look at word parts*
  - *use the first letter as a clue*
  - *read the sentence again and think about a word that would make sense*
- If your child is stuck on a word allow wait time. Don't be too quick to help! Children need time to think through options. It is okay to remind them to use one of the above suggestions or simply tell them the word to avoid unpleasant frustration.
- Point out and show how commas, periods, question marks and exclamation marks help us read with expression and fluency.
- If your child starts to struggle, try taking turns reading line by line or page by page. Another option is to try unison reading or reading out loud together. It may be that this book is better to be enjoyed as a read aloud book.

### Choosing Books

Help your child choose reading material that is not too difficult. Just like Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the reading material should be just right: **not too easy, not too hard, but just right**. Use the following three steps to help your child decide on a **just right** book.

**Step One:** Parent estimates or counts off about 100 words.

**Step Two:** Your child starts reading and every time they are stuck on a word have them put up a finger. If they go beyond five fingers then the text is too difficult. Assure your child that it won't be long before this book will be **just right**.

**Step Three:** Encourage your child to find something easier and follow step one and two again.

**Don't forget** children's librarians are happy to help you and your child find **just right** books.