

# TIPS FOR PARENTS OF EMERGENT AND EARLY READERS

Your young child is learning to piece together all kinds of information, moving from developing basic concepts of print to reading simple stories. Children in kindergarten and first grade are learning to weave together the meaning of a story, pictures and images, word meanings, language structures, and all those little black marks on the page. This kind of detailed work often requires young children to re-read favourite books, finding new information on each reading, and to read new books to practise their new skills.

Here are five tips that will help you coach your eager young reader.

## 1) CREATE A POSITIVE NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

- Flip through the book, look at the pictures and talk about the story before you or your child begin reading.
- Act like a coach. If your child asks you for help with a word, start by giving a clue.
- Look for your child's brilliance! Substituting the word 'puppy' for 'dog' may mean that your child is paying attention to the meaning of the story and using clues in the pictures. Substituting the word 'dig' for 'dog' may mean that your child is paying attention to the letters in the word.

## 2) READ IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

- Read to your child every day. Your child will love to hear you bring stories to life over several days.
- Take turns reading each page or character. At another time, listen to your child read from another early-reading book.
- All reading doesn't happen in books. When you're cooking, read the recipes together.

## 3) READ PURPOSEFULLY

- Read for information. Read street and shop signs together. At the supermarket, ask your child to point out certain items by reading the names of the products.
- Make a scrapbook with your child illustrating your holiday experiences and family traditions.
- Read books based on your child's interests and ideas. Nonfiction books are great to read together.

## 4) MAKE READING A HABIT

- Make a special bookshelf. Find a special place for your child to keep their books. Try to keep books in every room of your home.
- Books are great to read in the car, while waiting in line, or while riding on a bus.
- Encourage your child to read or tell stories to younger children, or even their teddy bear.

## 5) MAKE THE READING/WRITING CONNECTION

- Help your child make and keep a journal of thoughts they have at the end of a book or series.
- Make up a simple story frame to create a 'fill-in-the-blank' story. For example, write, 'Once upon a time there were \_\_\_\_\_. They told their \_\_\_\_\_ they were going to seek their \_\_\_\_\_.'
- Write down stories your child dictates to you—this will help your child understand writing strategies.

