

Reading *for* Success

Engaging Families in Your Literacy Program



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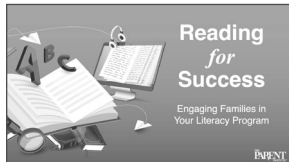
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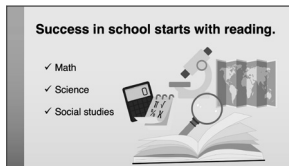


Presenter's script

This presenter's script provides suggested wording if you wish to personally narrate the *Reading for Success* PowerPoint presentation found in the online portal. You are, of course, free to modify the script to make the words your own, adding or deleting information as you choose. You may make changes in the presentation as well. Please note, however, that under the resource kit license, you may use the modifications only for your own school presentation use.



Slide 1
(Opening slide, no narration.)



Slide 2
Success in school starts with reading. When children become good readers, they build the foundation for becoming better learners. Reading opens the door to learning in all subjects, including math, science and social studies.
[+] To do math, your child must be able to recognize numbers, read word problems and learn math vocabulary.
[+] In science, your child will read nonfiction books and articles, read descriptions of science experiments, and learn scientific vocabulary.
[+] And in social studies, your child will need to read historical documents, maps and more.



Slide 3
As a parent, you have a critical role to play in helping your child develop the reading skills needed for success.



Slide 4
Reading is just as important outside of school. In fact, reading at home is one of the most effective—and enjoyable—ways to support your child's education. There are many ways to make reading a part of your family's daily routine. You can:
[+] Read to your child.
[+] Encourage your child to read independently.
[+] Read side-by-side with your child.




Slide 5
Reading aloud promotes a lifelong love of reading.
[+] Set aside regular times to read aloud every day. It's a great family bonding activity that promotes a lifelong love of reading. You can read at breakfast, after dinner, at bedtime—any time that works for your family.



Slide 6
Make story time enjoyable for your child. Take turns choosing the book. Hold the book so your child can see the pictures as you read. And take your time. Encourage your child to examine the pictures, predict what will happen next, and ask questions. And keep in mind that you don't always have to read stories or novels. Read news or magazine articles, biographies, poems, joke books—anything your child enjoys.



Send home literacy handouts

To remind parents about the importance of reading regularly, send home one of the “Family Handouts” included in this kit. In Sections 6 and 7, you will find handouts on a variety of reading-related topics. They’re ready to reproduce, either from the masters in this binder or from the PDFs in the online portal. 



Family Handout

The handouts are divided into two categories—**Reading Readiness** handouts, in Section 6, and **Encouraging Reading** handouts, in Section 7. The Reading Readiness handouts are primarily designed for families of beginning readers—roughly preschool through first grade. The Encouraging Reading handouts are designed for families of children who have already mastered the basics of reading.

The Reading Readiness handouts in Section 6 cover topics including:

- Fun with letters and sounds
- Learning to write
- Building a love of reading
- Building vocabulary
- Choosing the right books
- Reading games
- Talking and listening
- Library tips
- Reading as a family
- Managing recreational screen time

The Encouraging Reading handouts in Section 7 discuss topics including:

- Building vocabulary
- Leisure reading
- Learning from nonfiction
- Motivating reluctant readers
- Reading as a family
- Supporting struggling readers
- Managing recreational screen time
- Reading for test success
- Reading across the curriculum
- Visiting the library
- Word attack/decoding skills
- Writing
- Influence of the home on school success
- Making reading fun
- Improving reading comprehension
- Understanding reading jargon
- Reading aloud



Host a family literacy night

A family literacy night is an opportunity for you to get families excited about your school's literacy program. The event gives them a glimpse into what their children are doing in school, how they're being taught and what learning materials they're using. It also provides them with ideas they can use at home, from reading aloud to playing phonics games.

Ahead of time, ask each teacher or grade-level team to create one literacy station for families to visit. These can be literacy activities teachers already use in their classrooms, such as alphabet bingo or sight word bingo, magazine scavenger hunts, buddy reading on bean bag chairs, word sorts, etc. Have teachers bring copies of any reproducible materials they use so families can try the activities at home.

At your literacy night, start with a whole-group meeting. If the meeting will be short, children can sit with their families. If you plan a longer meeting, consider recruiting high school student volunteers to read or do other literacy activities with children in another room, such as the library. During the meeting you can:

- **Show the PowerPoint presentation**, “Reading for Success: Ways to Boost Your Child’s Literacy Skills” (included with this kit).
- **Provide an overview of your language arts program.** Explain the standards and curriculum materials you use. Describe a typical language arts block, providing details on elements like reading workshop, writing workshop, word study lessons, etc.
- **Show photos and videos.** Present slides with photos of instructional materials including books, writing tools, sight word lists, classroom word walls, anchor charts, etc. Explain how the materials are used. With family consent, show videos of students participating in focus lessons, reading groups, literacy centers, book clubs, etc.
- **Model a read-aloud.** Show families how you read to students in a way that maximizes learning and enjoyment. Hold the book so your audience can see the illustrations as you are reading. Read with expression, and pause occasionally to ask audience members to predict what will happen next. Wrap up with a brief discussion of the story.
- **Demonstrate technology.** Introduce participants to language arts websites, apps or programs their children use in school. Project the programs onto a screen for everyone to see, then do a few sample student activities while explaining how they build literacy skills. Also show families how to use your local public library database to find books, put holds on books, download audio books and find the calendar of events.
- **Introduce family literacy stations.** Send families off to do the activities.



Promote reading skills throughout the year

Every month of the school year is packed with opportunities to promote family engagement in reading.

Here are some ideas to consider:

August

- **Have an end-of-summer used book sale** that raises funds for your school and promotes reading! Here's how:
 - **Recruit a family-staff team** in the spring to plan the event.
 - **Ask families to gather books** for the sale during the summer break.
 - **Hold the sale** in conjunction with school registration, open house or another event that draws families to the school.
 - **Use proceeds from your sale** to promote your literacy program or purchase items for your school library.
- **Plan literacy programs** for the coming year, such as literacy night, a read-aloud event or your annual book fair. Be sure to involve families, including those who speak languages other than English, on your literacy team.

September

- **Introduce your reading curriculum.** Families always look forward to back-to-school night. It's a great opportunity to meet teachers, see their child's classroom, meet other parents and pick up the school handbook. To make literacy a highlight of this event, ask each teacher to:
 - **Introduce the reading curriculum** students will use.
 - **Encourage families to read** with their children at home.
 - **Show families** books used in the classroom.
 - **Inform families** about how reading skills will be assessed.
 - **Tell families** how to get help if their child struggles with reading.
- **Learn about libraries.** September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. Challenge everyone in your school community to get a library card. (Visit <https://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/card> for more information.) For a successful campaign:
 - **Ask your local library** to set up a table during back-to-school night, parent-teacher meetings, and other times when families will be in the building.
 - **Send home handouts** on the importance of regular family trips to the library. (See handouts on pages 66 and 85.)



Ask families to promote reading with a ‘screen time vs. reading’ log

Given the choice, many children will choose TV or video games over books. A “Screen Time vs. Reading Time” log might motivate them to choose books more often. A customizable version of this letter, which you can adapt to your needs, is available in the online portal.

(School Name)

Dear families,

We’re doing a class project—and we need your help! We are keeping track of the amount of time we spend reading versus the amount of time we spend in front of a screen. Please help your child complete the following chart and send it back to school next Monday. (Track recreational screen time only—not time spent doing schoolwork on a device.)

And remember to read together as often as possible.

| | Screen time | Reading time |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| Monday | | |
| Tuesday | | |
| Wednesday | | |
| Thursday | | |
| Friday | | |
| Saturday | | |
| Sunday | | |

Thanks!

Sincerely,



Build your child's vocabulary

A large vocabulary will give your child a strong foundation for reading. Building your child's vocabulary is easier than you may think. Just by introducing new words and playing fun word games, you are setting the stage for reading success. Try a few of the ideas below:

Introduce new words

- **Use new words** when you talk with your child. Some families avoid using words they think their child can't understand. But young children are captivated by the sounds of long and complex words. They want to use the "big" words adults use. So go ahead. Make some difficult words part of your regular conversation. Instead of saying the weather is *hot*, say it's *sweltering*. Describe a cake as *luscious* rather than *yummy*.
- **Listen to music** with your child. Sing along to age-appropriate music in the car. Learning the words to songs is a great way to help build your child's vocabulary.
- **Pick higher-level books.** When you pick new books to read aloud, pick titles that are a few levels above your child's current vocabulary. Point out new words as you read. "A *dwelling* is a place where people live, like a house. Can you guess who lives in this dwelling?" That way, your child will always be learning new words and ideas.
- **Play pretend.** If your child is pretending to be a doctor, use the word *stethoscope*. If you are playing with trains together, teach your child *freight*.

Play word games

- **Try "20 Questions" or "I Spy."** Using words to describe the object you're thinking of will boost your child's vocabulary.
- **Take turns giving each other a word.** Make up a story that uses that word. If the word is *apple*, the story might go: "I found an apple. I ate the apple. The apple was good."
- **Act out opposites.** Say *high* and have your child jump. Then say *low* and crouch down. Yell *loud* and whisper *quiet*.

Make a word wall

To build your child's *print vocabulary*—the words your child recognizes and understands in reading material—create a wall of words. Get a pack of index cards, a marker and tape. Then:

1. **Choose five words** that appear in many stories you read to your child, such as *and*, *the*, *went*, *said* and *play*.
2. **Write one word on each card.** Mount the cards in an easy-to-see place.
3. **Have your child pick one activity** each day to do with the words: Color the cards, trace over the letters or say them out loud.

After your child has learned these words, make a new set of cards using words from another book. Be sure to save the "old" cards for review.



Reading comprehension

Strong reading comprehension is the result of two very important skills: *decoding* + *language comprehension*. Decoding is sounding out a word (*c-a-t*), and language comprehension is knowing what a word means (a household pet that meows). When your child can do both of those things, reading material makes sense! Here are tips for boosting your child's comprehension before, during and after reading.

Before

- **Preview the material.** Before reading a story or novel, your child should read the title and look at the picture on the cover. Before reading a textbook chapter or nonfiction article, your child should read the title and scan the material, paying particular attention to headings and graphics. It's also helpful to look up any unknown boldface words.
- **Think about what you already know.** Tapping into background knowledge can set your child up for success. What does your child know about the topic? Based on that knowledge, what does your child expect will happen in the story, or what does your child expect to learn from the chapter? Take a look at the questions at the end of the story or chapter, if there are any. They will help guide your child's reading.

During reading

- **Form mental images.** Encourage your child to visualize characters, places and events. Your child could draw pictures of mental images to practice this skill.
- **Make personal connections.** Meaningful connections that boost comprehension include relating to characters' feelings and actions.

For example, "I understand how the character feels. I would be sad if my cat got lost, too" is a deeper connection than "I have a cat, too."

- **Read between the lines.** Sometimes reading comprehension includes more than just correctly sounding out words and understanding what they mean. Your child may need to make inferences, or read between the lines, for true comprehension.

After reading

- **Have your child tell** you the most important parts of the story or text. What is the main idea? If it's a short story or a novel, who are the main characters? What conflicts do the characters face?
- **Practice critical thinking.** Ask for your child's thoughts about the material. Does it make sense? Should the author have presented it in a different way? Did characters in the novel make positive choices?



Help your child attack new words

After learning the sound or sounds each letter makes—either alone or in combination with other letters—your child will be able to read many words. But your child will continue to encounter unfamiliar words throughout life. Here’s how you can support your child’s word attack efforts.

What is decoding?

You can think of decoding as cracking a code. Each letter or combination of letters makes one or more specific sounds. Blended together, these sounds make words that have meaning. A young reader must learn to understand the relationship between letters and sounds, recognize letter patterns, and apply pronunciation rules to written words. For example, when the letters *p-e-n* are blended together, they make the word *pen*.

Not all words can be sounded out through direct letter-sound relationships. Decoding also requires your child to learn the sounds made by or associated with letter combinations. For example, *p* and *h* make the /f/ sound in *phone*, *o* and *u* make the /ow/ sound in *our*, and the *gh* is silent in *through*.

Practice at home

While learning how to correctly sound out words, your child will need lots of practice. Try these ideas:

- **Play word games.** Write words on index cards. Take turns selecting a card and reading the word by sounding it out, using known letter combinations—or both. To sound out a word, say each part separately: beginning, middle and end. Don’t exaggerate the sounds (*cuh-aaah-tuh* for *cat*). Your child needs to learn what they naturally sound like (*c-a-t*). If the word can’t be sounded out using direct letter-sound relationships, ask whether your child sees any familiar letter combinations or word parts.

- **Ask your child to sound out** the words on your grocery list.
- **Place food boxes and cans on your table.** See if your child can sound out words on the labels: *fl-ou-r*, *p-ea-s*, etc.
- **Have a treasure hunt.** Hide words written on slips of paper throughout your house. Then have your child find the slips and decode the words.
- **Make time for rhyme.** Rhyming is a great way for your child to discover that changing a word’s beginning sound creates an entirely new word.

Sight words

Sight words are words that your child sees often and can recognize quickly. Ask the teacher for a list of sight words appropriate for your child’s grade level, or search for a list online. To help your child learn these important words, follow these steps to create a “word wall”:

1. **Hang up a bulletin board** or poster board, or set aside space on a wall. Choose a spot that your child will see frequently.
2. **Write a few sight words on index cards** or slips of paper, and post them on the word wall.
3. **Encourage your child to read** the words on the wall regularly and look for the words in books.
4. **Add new words** as your child masters the words on the wall.



Reading & writing go hand-in-hand

Children often begin reading before they can write—just as babies begin listening before they can speak. But the relationship between reading and writing (and listening and speaking) is very important. Use the following information to help your child understand the reading-writing connection.

What to expect

When writing, your child should:

- **Be able to focus** on forming ideas rather than simply forming letters or sounding out words.
- **Write about reading material** in order to think more deeply about it.
- **Revise and edit** work so it makes sense and includes details.
- **Benefit from your support.** Give compliments and display your child's work proudly!

The writing process

When authors write stories, they rarely finish their work in one sitting. Strong writing involves this step-by-step process:

1. **Plan.** Young writers often start by drawing a picture. Encourage your child to add as many details as possible to drawings so it's much easier to add details to stories. Older children might use a graphic organizer or an outline to plan.
2. **Draft.** At first, your child can write the story without focusing on mistakes. Be encouraging while your child works.
3. **Revise.** Have your child read the draft aloud. Ask questions that will encourage your child to add details ("Who else was there?") or clear up any confusion ("Did you walk the dog before or after you went to your friend's house?")
4. **Edit.** Have your child check for spelling mistakes and other little errors.

What you can do

Here are some ways to encourage your child to write:

- **Read books about writing**, such as *Rocket Writes a Story* by Tad Hills and *Little Red Writing* by Joan Holub.
- **Give your child a "writer's toolbox."** Include a special notebook or journal and different kinds of paper, pens and pencils.
- **Write notes to each other.** Leave them in a "secret" spot.
- **Let your child see you writing.** (Send a card or letter in the mail to your child.)
- **Spark creative writing.** Find a wordless picture book or one with few words. Have your child write a story to go with the illustrations. Then read the adventure together!
- **Write stories together.** Write the start of a sentence ("Two elephants got loose at the zoo ..."), then have your child continue.
- **Ask your child to teach you** a game by writing step-by-step instructions.
- **Make a family cookbook.** Let your child write a favorite recipe and write a short story about a time you ate that dish.
- **Design a bookmark together.** Have your child write a favorite verse, song or quote.
- **Praise your child's writing.** The best reward for a writer is an appreciative reader!