



Welcome back to the new program year, Reading Mentors!

Every reading session is an opportunity to guide your student to success. Here are a few tips and strategies a mentor can use to spark a lifelong passion for reading and learning!

Look through the book first! Sometimes a bit of an “orientation” can help you and the child warm up to the book, or decide if it may be too difficult.

Know your level! An “instructional level” of reading aloud is when one in 10 words is difficult for the child to read. Here’s where the “five-finger rule” comes into play: If more than five words on a page cause a child to stumble, the book is too hard!

Stick with your student’s comfort level! Remember – we are not teachers or tutors. It is fine to read a book that you might think is “too easy” for your student’s grade level. The comfort of familiar text can be empowering!

Let the student self-correct! Self-regulation by the child is so very important. Give your student plenty of chances to correct pronunciation or word choice.

Check comprehension! It’s the most important thing to fully engage a child in the reading process – and it’s the quickest way to make a child feel successful. Ask plenty of gentle comprehension questions: “Why do you think the character is happy?”

Do not over-correct! Only correct errors that will force the student to lose track of the meaning of the passage. A rule of thumb: pick only one or two errors to correct in a typical reading session. If it does not change the meaning, it is usually better to leave it alone!

Use context cues! Try to avoid saying “sound it out.” Sounding out may be difficult or impossible if a child does not know what sound a letter blend makes, or continues to choose the wrong sound when there are many choices. Instead, encourage the child to use context cues – pictures on the page, surrounding words and phrases, etc.

We hope these tips help to make your reading sessions more productive, more successful, and more enjoyable than ever this year. Remember: The final rule on our students’ program contract is to have fun!