

# Fostering Reading Growth

While all children learn at different rates and in different ways, there are some general patterns of growth for learning to read. Below, stages of learning to read are described as well as tips for caregivers as they support children in their first attempts at reading on their own. It is vital to note, when children begin to want to read books on their own, it is very important to continue reading aloud to them! Reading aloud provides an opportunity for children to spend quality time with a loved one, increase their vocabulary, develop their language, and interact with texts too challenging for them to read themselves.

## *A Note About Teaching Children to Read:*

This resource has been provided to help simplify the process of learning to read and of coaching a beginning reader, however, it is not the sole responsibility of a librarian, caregiver or parent to teach children how to read. Children enrolled in a quality school program should be taught how to read by a knowledgeable professional. These guidelines have been provided for caregivers who might want to help support a child as they grow through the stages of reading.



# Stage 1: Read TONS of Books to Me



*Text Credit: ARC Press*

## How to know if a child is ready?

- Your child is ready right now!

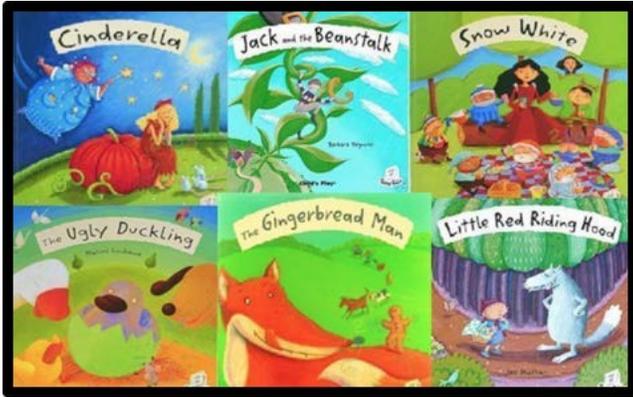
## What to look for when selecting books:

- Any book that a child enjoys is a great choice.
- Choosing books that you truly enjoy will model enjoyment of reading.
- Re-reading your child's favorite books, over and over again, is a wonderful way to build early reading skills.

## Caregiver coaching:

- Make sure to have reading aloud to a child be a warm and loving experience. Cuddle up together, laugh, be silly!
- If your child is not interested in the text selected, put it down and choose another book.
- If reading a book isn't going well, change gears. Tell family stories, draw a story, play out your child's imagined stories, etc.
- Take time to really look at the pictures and discuss the photos or illustrations. What do the pictures and illustrations tell you that the words possibly do not?
- From time to time, point to the words as you read. You are showing the child that the words on the page tell the story.
- As children mature, you can begin playing with the words on the page. Try some of these:
  - Let's count how many words are on this page.
  - Can you find the letter \_\_\_?
  - This part of the story talks about a boat. What sound does "boat" start with? What letter is that? Can you find a word that starts with a "b"?

## Stage 2: Emphasizing Rereading Familiar Storybooks



Text Credit: ARC Press

### How to know if a child is ready?

- Your child is ready now and hopefully you are already re-reading some of your child's favorite books.
- Many children begin to "read" a story by reading the pictures or remembering the words you have read to them previously. If a child is beginning to read the pictures of a book, turn the pages and retell the story on their own – they are well on their way to learning to love reading on their own!

### What to look for when selecting Books:

- Any book that a child is excited to read!
- Storybooks: books that have a beginning, middle and end.
- The best books at this stage are books that you and your child have only 1 read over and over again together.

### Caregiver coaching : Trying out reading

- Encourage your child to read familiar storybooks to you, a younger sibling, or a friend.
- If your child says something like, "I can't read, I don't know how to read the words yet," remind them that they already know a ton about reading. Gently encourage them to try telling you the story by just looking at the pictures and remembering the story on their own.
- At this stage, children need a lot of praise and encouragement. Get excited about their first attempts to read a story to you. Don't worry if they are not using the words on the page to guide their storytelling.
- As children get more comfortable, they may start touching the words as they read. It's ok if the words they say don't match the words on the page. Touching each word on the page as you tell a story is an important first step in learning to read.

## Stage 3: Let's Start with Pattern Books



*Text Credit: ARC Press*

### How to know if a child is ready?

- When your child starts expressing a desire to read on their own.
- Children around the age of 4 or 5 are usually ready to begin playing with pattern books.

### What to look for when selecting Books:

- Any books that your child is excited to read!
- Pattern books — books that follow a pattern from page to page.
- The best pattern books for this stage of learning are books that have only 1-2 word changed on each page.
- The picture on the page should give a child a clue as to what the new word is.

### Step 1: Coaching — Following the Pattern

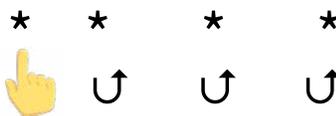
- Say, “I’m going to read the first two pages to you.” (Be sure to point to the words as you read.)
- Say, “Now, it’s time for you to read!”
- Encourage the child to follow the pattern you started.
- Encourage the child to use the pictures to help them.
- Don’t worry if the child doesn’t point to each word yet or get all of the words correct.
- Once the child can follow the pattern and use the pictures to guide what they say, they are ready for step 2!

## Step 2: Coaching Using Your Finger



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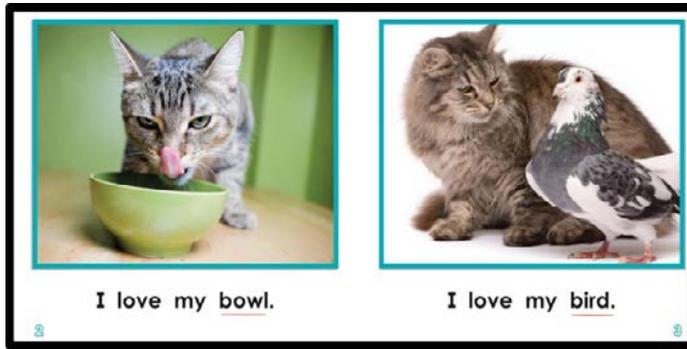
I love my bowl.



*Note: This step is about touching one word and you say one word. The words do not need to match perfectly.*

- Say, “It looks like you are ready to start using the words on the page as you follow the pattern and pictures. Watch me as I do this!”
- Model how to read the book and touch one word for each word that you say.
- Model how sometimes you might run out of words on the page and have to go back and try again.
- Model how sometimes you might end up with an extra word on the page and have to try again.
- As the child attempts to do this it’s okay to coach them a bit. Try, “Oh no! It looks like we ran out of words, let’s try this one together again!”
- When a child can read several pattern books and touch one word for every word they say aloud, they are ready for step 3!

### Step 3: Coaching First Letter and Picture Matching.

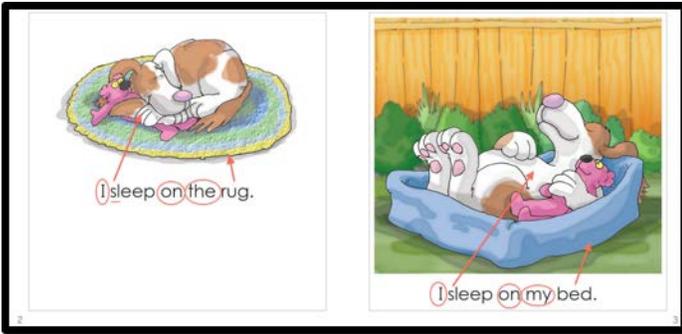


Text Credit: ARC Press

*Note: Making sure that the first letter of each word that we say, matches the sound we are saying is an important step in the reading process!*

- A pattern book may have pages that say something like:
  - Page 1 - “Look at the ducks”
  - Page 2 - “Look at the birds.”
  - Page 3 - “Look at the puppies.”
- In Step 3 of pattern books, we are coaching the child to use the first letter of each word to make sure we are saying the correct word.
- Show the child how you can use the first letter of the word AND the picture as a clue. Say, “Look, I’ve noticed something. If I look at the first letter of a word on the page and think about the sound it makes, then look at the picture clues, I can figure out the word. Look at that last word on this page (point to the word duck and the first letter). I know that letter is a “d” and says /d/. Now, look at the picture. At first I thought the word was bird, now I know it says something that starts with the /d/ sound. Duck!”
- As the child reads words that do not match the first sound of the word, gently coach them to “try that again.” You might say, “Let’s look at the first letter and the picture. What sound does that letter make again? Okay, now look at the picture. Hmm... What word starts with that sound AND matches the picture.”

## Stage 4: Simple books with picture clues



Text Credit: ARC Press

### What to look for when selecting Books:

- Any Books that your child is excited to read!
- Simple picture books with 1 sentence per page.
- The pictures on each page will give clues to most of the words on the page.
- There will be a few words on each page that students will need to learn by sight (sight words) because either the picture won't help or they are hard to sound out.

### Caregiver coaching:

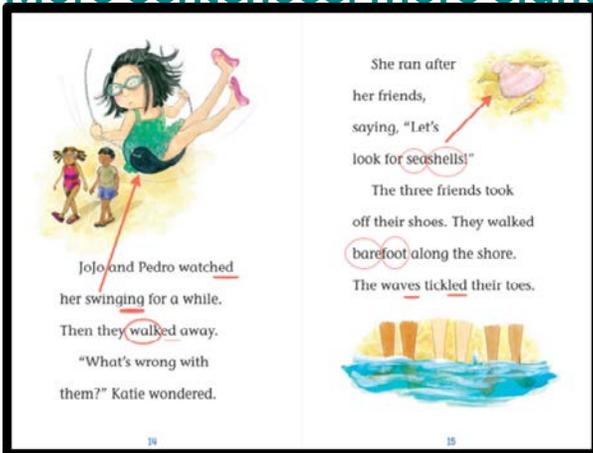
- Stage 4 is a big transition period for kids. They will need more support and a ton of encouragement.
- Point out sight words to a child. Go on sight word scavenger hunts! Say, "I noticed there are a lot of "the" words in this book. Let's find them all before we begin reading.
- At this stage, children will need to re-read books over and over again to master the sight words and build confidence.
- Play with sight words! Sight word bingo, memory, etc. Please note: drilling children with sight word flash cards is not a great idea for building a love of reading.

I	at	is	to	like
me	it	am	come	and
a	this	in	here	up
go	see	my	you	look
the	said	we	on	can

# Beginning Sight Words:

## Stage 5 and Beyond!:

### More sentences, more sight words, more tricks!



Text Credit: ARC Press

### What to look for when selecting Books:

- Any Book that a child is excited to read!
- Short paragraphs that include 2-4 sentences.
- Most pages have a picture, but some pages may not.

### Caregiver coaching:

- Stage 5 and beyond should lead with a child's interest. It's important that they are excited to read books and that they choose what they read.
- As children read, they will come to words that they have trouble figuring out and possibly read incorrectly. If their mistake doesn't change the meaning of the text, do not correct them!
- If a child makes a mistake that doesn't make sense, here are the three essential questions to ask them:
  - Does the word look right?
  - Does it sound right?
  - Does it make sense?
- Once a child knows they need to fix the word, here are some coaching tricks you can try:
  - What sound does the first letter say?
  - Does the picture help you?
  - Can you find a part of the word that you do know?
- Try not to give the word to the reader, instead - try to coach them to figure it out on their own. However, if you know that the word is far too difficult for the level of reading, it's okay to give the word at times.