

READING SITUATIONS AND PROMPTS FOR THE VOLUNTEER

On picking a book

- "Why did you pick this book?"
- "What do you think it will be about?"
... or possibly...

"I think that you would enjoy working on a different book, let us go find one."

Often the child and volunteer will have a specific book or a specific group of books already picked out by the teacher. But sometimes the child will need to pick a book with a volunteer. Please help the child pick up a book at an appropriate reading level. If the child is struggling to read to the extent that he cannot make sense of the book, or enjoy it, then the book is probably not the best choice for the child.

Before beginning to read a book to (or with) a beginning reader -

- "Let us look at the pictures first and see what this story is going to be about."

Children's picture books have such special and beautiful illustrations. Take time to look at the cover and the book's illustrations. Sometimes, you might want to talk about the book cover flaps. Or talk about who wrote the book. Let the child glean as much as possible from the pictures. This allows the child to begin to focus on the story before s/he starts the hard job of deciphering the words.

While the volunteer and the student are reading the book-

- "How do you think that made the character feel?" "Did you ever feel that way?"
- "What do you think _____ (a particular word) means?"
- "Did that ever happen to you?" "How did you feel when that happened?" "Were you surprised when that happened?"
- "Did you think that was funny?" "Why?" "Why not?"
- "What do you think the other character is going to answer?"
- "Would you recommend this book to a friend?" "Why?" or "Why not?"

On Praise and Criticism -

Do not talk about every mistake the child makes. It may chip away at their fluency and confidence. It may also confuse them.

DO acknowledge their successes and hard work.

- "I like the way you figured that out!"
- "You work so hard today"
- "I have noticed you are reading much better now!"

Prompts for helping a child read a text with more words on a page -

If the volunteer and child trade off reading, it allows for the child to move through a book more quickly and keep the story line more in focus.

- "I will read a sentence (paragraph, ½ page, page) then you can read a sentence (paragraph, ½ page, page)."

Sometimes the volunteer may want to read chorally with the child so the child can feel reading fluency.

- "Let's read this page (paragraph, ½ page) together."

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Prompts for strengthening the child's READING STRATEGIES –

If the child doesn't seem to know or remember the word, the strategy is getting clues from patterns and rhymes.

- **"That word rhymes with this word that you just read." (Point and say the word that the child has already read.)**

If the child consistently says a word that doesn't fit grammatically in the story:

- **"You read _____." (Point out the word and have them say it again.) "Did that sound right?" or "Did that word make sense in the story?"**
- **"Do people talk like that?"**

If the child doesn't seem to remember the word, one strategy is recognizing the word by the letters, shape, and length.

- **"You just read that very word on this (or pervious) page. (Show the child the word.) "Now do you remember it?"**
- **"Would you like to search for that word on the next page?"**

Note: It is important that the volunteer avoids using names of the letters. Instead the volunteer should say the sound the letter represents. It is also important that the volunteer says the sound correctly. Please be careful to say soft consonant sound without being tempted to give them too much breath by adding the short a, short u sound or the schwa sound. Ex: Whisper "B" not "Ba", "D" not "Du"

If the child says a word that is not the written word, but begins with the same sound the third strategy is the volunteer say:

- **"The word you said starts that same way this word starts?" (Point to the word) "Slide your finger under the word and say all the sounds you see."**

If the child is trying to read a long word, and does not know how to approach it, the strategy is to ask:

- **"Do you see any chunks in that word that you know?"**
- **" Do you know this sound ".... Do you know this part of the word?..."**

If the child says and blends all the sounds of a word correctly, but still does not understand the word.

- **"Now reread the sentence with that word in it."**

If you notice that the child has no tone in her or his voice or that s/he is running over punctuation, there is a very good chance that the child is sounding out the words without understanding or thinking about what s/he is reading.

- **" Stop there and let's talk about what you just read."**

Other choices for their lack of interest might not be to talk about it but to "play" with it.

- **"Let me read that in a variety of different ways (funny, exaggerated, fast, really slow) and see what you think."**
- **"You read it in a couple of ways (funny, really fast, really slow) and see what it means to you now"**

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On noticing a child's reading behaviors

The volunteer, after several sessions, may begin to notice patterns in the child's reading behaviors. Perhaps the child consistently relies upon sounding out words, or perhaps the child often guesses a word that makes sense but is not the printed word. Or perhaps, the volunteer may notice that because of lack of exposure to books, the child cannot rely upon his won sense of how books sound... IF you have questions, about how to help your student more, please write them in the documentation notebook or ask you student's teacher or Julie Weilga (*Partners in Literacy*) reading specialist.

At *Partners in Literacy*, we see reading as a social activity.

By talking about a text, the student learns to understand it and internalize it.

The conversation about what the book might be about before reading, What is happening during reading, and what happened after reading are the **greatest gifts** that the volunteer will give to the child.

The volunteer should feel free to draw picture, act things out, refer to other books, TV shows, or movies to connect the book to something the child already knows.

The volunteer should remember:

1. Beginning to read is a big Job
2. Reading with a disability is a hard job.
3. Improving at reading is a big job.
4. Being thoughtful and focused about reading is a hard job.
5. Beginning reading can be uneven. Do no be surprised if sometimes the child seems to read easily and sometimes the child has a great deal of trouble.
6. Remember the child is working hard.

Acknowledge the small successes. It is the overall progress that you want to strive for. We are hoping to inspire a love of reading that will last a lifetime.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND FOR YOU CARING.