

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Beginning readers need help to become successful readers. Please continue to read aloud to your child daily. Choose books with a little more complex vocabulary than the books he or she is reading independently.

When your child is ready, let him or her read some during the read-aloud sessions. Remember to help when needed. If your child gets stuck on a word, it's OK to give the word. If your child gets tired, take over the reading or stop and pick it up another night. Offer positive reinforcement to keep this fun. Keeping this fun will ensure your child wants to have additional reading time together.

Good readers are curious. Ask questions and encourage your children to ask questions when reading or during a read-aloud. Open-ended questions are acceptable and preferred. These are questions that start with "why" or "how". Also try to relate the story to life. Ask how a main character might be like or unlike yourselves, or someone else you know. Relate the story to the world. What happens in the world that is similar to events in the story? Relate the events to another book. How is this story like another you've read? These connections help children understand the reading better.

We have to share some cautions with you. When your child initially begins to read out loud, offer support and encouragement. Do whatever is necessary to keep the positive attitude. There will be a point when your child puts everything together and starts reading. Remember that pictures are still a part of the reading. Encourage your child to use the pictures when stuck on a word, or to confirm a correct reading.

Finally, the reason some children do not read as much as they should is not because they do not like reading, but because they cannot find books that interest them. If your child has a book he or she likes to read over and over again, then find some more like it. If your child has a favorite author or illustrator, then find more books by that same author or illustrator.

Yours in reading,

Raising Readers in Story County

Ames Public Library

*Source for Parent Handouts: Involving Parents in Their Child's Reading Development: A Guide for Teachers by Bruce Johnson (2008).*