south dakota DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Learning. Leadership. Service.

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READING tips

Welcome to the third edition of the Reading and Behavior Tips Newsletter created for families and caregivers of elementary students.

Each month you will find activities, tools, and strategies gathered from educators and leaders in their fields that you can do at home with your child. Enjoy and have fun!

Tip:

Get your student excited about reading! If you're excited, they'll be excited too! Make reading together a special time of day so everyone can look forward to it. Aim for 30 minutes, but if you don't have 30 minutes, any amount of time will do! 15 minutes of reading a day has been proven to accelerate reading growth for students.



Reading:

There are five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. This is what is known as the Science of Reading, a body of research that demonstrates how we learn to read. Last month, we had fun playing with phonemes, the sounds we hear. That sound play is referred to as phonemic awareness.

This month, we will look at phonics. Phonics teaches children the relationship between written letters or groups of letters and the correlating sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. It starts with basic letter to sounds and advances to include common spelling patterns, syllable types, prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

There are many fun ways to encourage students to become more practiced and confident in connecting the right sounds to the printed letters. Here are a few activities you can do at home:

- **Decodable books:** Decodable books are books for early readers that can be sounded out using the phonics skills they have already been taught. Encourage your child to read decodable books to you, a favorite stuffed animal, a family pet, and a sibling!
- **Word Ladders:** Draw a ladder on a piece of paper and print a simple word on the top rung. Keep changing one letter in the word all the way to the bottom. For example, "cat, can, man, mat, bat, bit, sit..."
- **What's Missing?** Cut out simple pictures from catalogues or old books. Glue them onto paper and label each picture, omitting one letter. For example, under a picture of the number "10," print out "_ e n"; then, under a picture of a "pig," print "p _ g"; under a picture of a "chip," print "_ _ i p"; and so on. Encourage your child to fill in the missing letter and read the word.
- **Breaking Up Syllables:** Print individual syllables on word cards and let your child arrange the cards and read the word. For example, print and mix up the syllables to words like: "fan tas tic" "ab sent" "pump kin" "din ner" "in sect." You can also use the two-syllable word cards to play a game of memory. With all the cards flipped over, find two that form a word and read it.
- **Word Sort:** Print several index cards with single words such as can, man, pot, run, rib, bat. Encourage your child to sort them into piles. See what your child chooses. Maybe the sorting is done by first sound, last sound, middle sound... However the words are sorted, read them together, and then find a new way to sort them.

For more information on the Science of Reading, please visit the South Dakota Department of Education's Literacy Framework webpage.

Behavior:

Last month, we talked about setting up rules and expectations at home for your child. Did you find three to five positive expectations you would like your child to demonstrate? Have you written them down and hung them where your child can see what the expectations are and how to follow them?

If you decided, for example, you would like your expectations to include "Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful," it is important to help your child become fluent with these skills.

Here is how you can help:

Teach
With your child, establish rules for each of your expectations by writing down what it looks like to be kind, responsible, and respectful. Include the rules for each expectation on your chart paper.

Practice the rules in the places your child needs to demonstrate the skill. For example, if being responsible includes picking up toys after playing, go into the child's room and practice picking up the toys. If being responsible means washing your hands before a meal, go into the bathroom and practice hand washing. If being kind means sharing your toys, practice turn-taking.

Provide examples and non-examples. "Am I being kind when I share my cookie?" "Is it being responsible to leave food on the floor when I drop it?"

Acknowledge
When you see your child following an expectation, be sure to offer praise using that same language. "You were so respectful when you held the door open for me. Thank you!" "That was so kind of you to let your sister have the first pancake. What a great brother." "Thank you for being responsible and putting your plate in the sink."

Prompt
If you know your child will struggle to follow an expectation in a setting, be sure to remind them before the event. "Remember, when we go outside to play, you need to take turns on the swing. That is being kind." "Remember, after supper, you always wash your hands and face. That is being responsible." "We are going to see Grandma. Remember, it is respectful to say 'please' and 'thank you' when we are there."

Next month, we will talk about redirecting.

We appreciate your feedback

Please fill out this quick survey to help us meet your needs.