School District of Athens
One Town. One Team. One Dream.

Bluejay Home Reading Strategies and Supports

To support your child's literacy growth, here are a few strategies to try at home. These activities are aligned with the five key pillars of the Science of Reading; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. By adding these activities to daily home routines, a child's literacy skills can be boosted in an enjoyable and engaging way. Please reach out to your child's teacher if you have questions or need additional resources.

Phonemic Awareness: Building Sound Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds in spoken words. Here are some fun ways to strengthen your child's sound awareness:

- Sound Games: Play "I Spy" but with sounds. For example, "I spy something that starts with /m/." This helps your child tune into beginning sounds.
- Syllable Clapping: Choose words and have your child clap out the syllables. For example, "table" has two syllables, so your child would clap twice.
- Segmenting Sounds: Say a word like "cat" and ask your child to break it into individual sounds—/k/, /a/, /t/. You can make this fun by using small toys or blocks, with each sound getting its own block.

Phonics: Connecting Sounds to Letters

Phonics involves connecting letters to the sounds they make. Here are some engaging ways to practice phonics:

- Letter Hunt: Use magnetic letters on the fridge. Say a sound, like /b/, and ask your child to find the letter that makes that sound.
- Word Building: Give your child a set of letter cards and ask them to build simple words like "hat," "dog," or "sun." You can start with shorter, 3-letter words (CVC words) and increase difficulty as they improve.
- Phonics Stories: After reading a simple book together, point out specific words and talk about the letter-sound relationships. For example, "Look at the word 'bat.' What sound does the 'b' make? What about the 't'?"

Fluency: Reading Smoothly and with Expression

Fluency helps children read quickly and accurately while also understanding what they are reading. Try these ideas to build fluency:

- Echo Reading: Read a sentence or passage aloud and then have your child "echo" it back to you, matching your pace and expression. This helps them learn how fluent reading sounds.
- Re-read Favorite Books: Encourage your child to read their favorite books multiple times. Familiarity with the text helps improve reading speed and accuracy.
- Read and Record: Have your child read a passage aloud while you record them on a phone or tablet. Then, play it back so they can listen to their own reading and make improvements.

Reading to children, even before they can understand words, teaches them to associate books with love and affection.
~Unknown

Vocabulary: Building Word Knowledge

A strong vocabulary is essential for comprehension. Here are a few easy ways to expand your child's vocabulary at home:

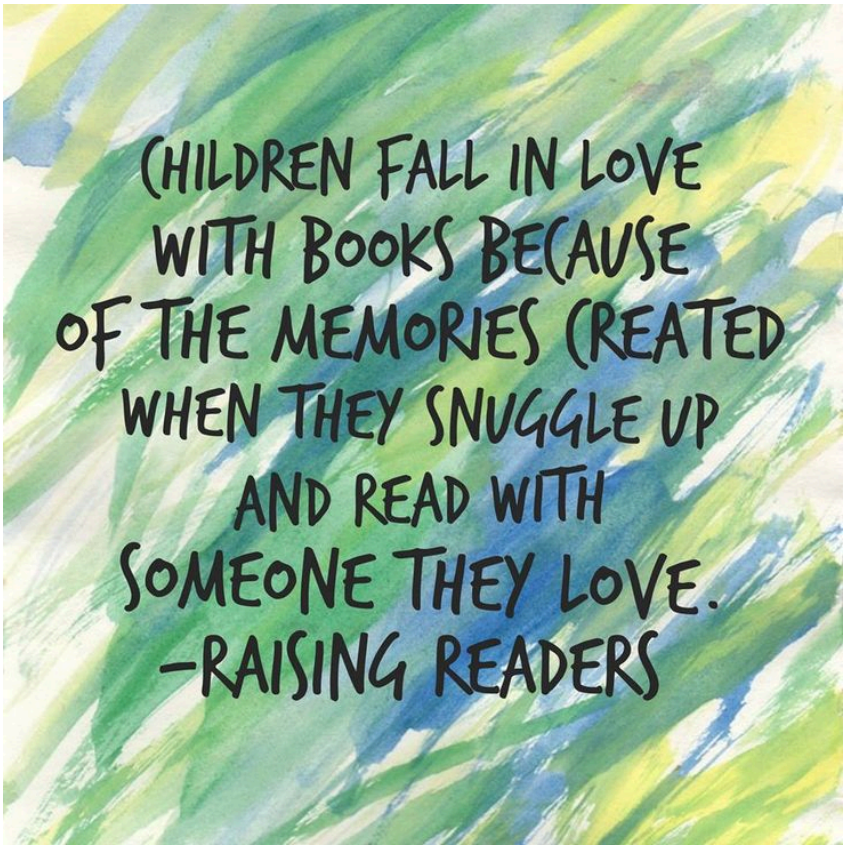
- Word of the Day: Introduce a new word every day and use it in sentences throughout the day. For example, if the word is "gigantic," use it during meals, playtime, or while talking about the weather.
- Categorize Words: Choose a category, like animals or foods, and take turns naming words that fit in that category. Then, talk about what the words mean and how they are similar or different.
- Context Clues: When reading together, if you come across an unfamiliar word, ask your child to look for clues in the text to figure out its meaning. For example, "The gigantic tree stood taller than all the others." Ask, "What do you think 'gigantic' means based on the sentence?"

Comprehension: Understanding What We Read

Comprehension is all about understanding and connecting with the text. Here are some ideas to boost comprehension:

- Ask Questions: While reading, ask questions that prompt your child to think about the story. For example, "What do you think will happen next?" or "Why do you think the character is feeling sad?"
- Retell the Story: After finishing a book, have your child retell the story in their own words. You can make it even more fun by encouraging them to act it out or draw pictures of the story.
- Make Connections: Encourage your child to connect the story to their own life. For example, if a character goes to the beach, ask your child, "Have you ever been to the beach? What did you do there?"

"Children fall in love with books because of the memories created when they snuggle up and read with someone they love."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-RAISING READERS