

## Helpful Hints for Supporting Literacy at Home

### Creating a literacy rich environment

- Set a goal for your child to read 30 minutes a day. Include the whole family! Work together to determine how much time is reasonable to spend during a week reading. Take into account work responsibilities, summer activities, and family events. Keep track of the time spent reading, then celebrate when you meet your goal. Look ahead to the next week and see if you can increase the goal. Even a few extra minutes a week add up quickly!
- Visit your public library. Libraries are good for checking out books, but also for joining book clubs and talking to other readers. [Fort Bend County Libraries](#) currently provide a wide range of services and resources, including e-books.
- Talk to your kids about what they are reading. Whether a person loves or hates a book, they are always eager to talk about it. Give your children this opportunity.
- Read with, to, and alongside your children. Your children will value reading more if they see that their parents value reading. Talk to your children about what you are reading. Share your reading life with your children, no matter your interests. It might even inspire them to look at new topics.
- When your child asks what a word means, help them look it up in a traditional or web-based dictionary. Help them use clues in the text to find the best definition, then talk through how the definition helps them understand what they are reading.
- Keep a family word wall. As you and your child come across new words in text, write them on a piece of paper and put them up on the refrigerator, the bathroom mirror, the back of a door—any blank space. Watch for those words in other texts, or listen for them on television.
- Be flexible. Reading is supposed to be enjoyable. Work with your reader to find the “right-for-them” text, the right time of day to read, the right goal to set.
- If your child is constantly on the internet, encourage them to do their own fact-checking and research on topics of interest.

### Talking about reading

There’s no one way to get your child talking about books, but here is an easy way to talk to your child about their reading that may help develop beyond those one-word teenage responses. You can pick just one question or use a combination. Use the questions to model how you think when you read, too.

- BHH Reading: When you read, tell me about what is...

In the *Book*:

- What’s this about?
- Who’s telling the story?
- What does the author want you to know?

In your *Head*:

- What surprised you?
- What does the author think you already know?
- What changed, challenged, or confirmed your thinking?

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- What did you notice?

In your *Heart*:

- What did you learn about yourself, others, or society?
- How will this help you to be better?

(adapted from *Disrupting Thinking*, Kylene Beers and Robert Probst, 2017)

- Write sentence stems on strips of paper or popsicle sticks, and place them in a jar or mug. Draw one and fill in the blank to talk about a book. Some sentence stems include:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| ○ That reminds me of...     | ○ I figured out. . .                          |
| ○ I don't understand...     | ○ I got confused when. . . so...              |
| ○ Why...                    | ○ I didn't expect. . .                        |
| ○ It confused me when...    | ○ I first thought. . . but now I realize. . . |
| ○ I got it when...          | ○ What puzzled me the most                    |
| ○ I wonder...               | ○ was. . .                                    |
| ○ This is good because...   | ○ I was really surprised when...              |
| ○ I agree/disagree...       | ○ I will understand this better               |
| ○ I can relate to...        | ○ if I . . .                                  |
| ○ This makes me think of... | ○ I think tomorrow I'll try                   |
| ○ I have connection to...   |   |
| ○ I got stuck. . .          |   |

(adapted from *The Reading Strategies Book*, Jennifer Serravallo, 2015)

### Why read at all during the summer?

Summer reading prevents the “summer setback” that often happens when students refrain from reading. Research has shown that students who do not continue to read in the summer decline in academic achievement (Cahill, Horvath, McGill-Franzen, & Allington, 2013; Cooper et al., 1996; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997; Heyns, 1978).

Reading over the summer months keeps students’ minds engaged and makes for an easier transition to the next grade level because they have continued, not stunted, their reading levels (Cahill, et al., 2013; Kim, 2004).

Summer reading has been proven to reduce the gaps between student demographic groups, and to help close achievement gaps (Cooper et al., 1996; Duncan & Murnane, 2011).

While engaged in summer reading, students are enhancing their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading achievement in general. Summer reading supports and encourages students to become lifelong readers. This supports lifelong critical thinking skills, habits that we strive to create for all students.