

Parent and Community Resource Coalition

Lakewood Memorial Library

Reading Aloud to Children

What is it?

From infancy onward, children benefit from listening to someone read to them. They learn the language of the written word, which is somewhat different from oral language. They learn to love books and reading, as they snuggle with a loved one to look at and listen to books. As they get older, well into elementary school age, they benefit from hearing texts too difficult for them to read independently.

Reading Aloud to Pre-K Children

Look at picture books with your child several times each day for 5 or 10 minutes per session. Reread favorites.

Very young children like books with big, bold pictures. Point to things in the books. When your child starts to talk, ask him or her to find pictures (“Where’s the truck?”).

Your child may like to act out or retell stories or parts of stories. He or she may also pretend to read. Encourage this!

Eventually your child will learn that we read print not pictures. He or she will begin to look at the print while someone reads aloud. You can help by making sure your child can see the print and by drawing your fingers under the print as you read.

Reading Aloud to Older Children

Keep reading aloud, for 15-20 minutes per day, even after your child begins to read. Select books based on interest, books that are too difficult for your child to read independently.

Encourage your child to guess what will happen next in stories. Ask questions like “What do you think is going to happen? Why?” Encourage your child to talk about how stories connect to his or her life. These discussions support the development of problem-solving skills.

Older students can also read while listening. Ask him or her to follow along silently while you read aloud. This builds sight vocabulary and fluency.

Visit the public library each week. Help your child get a library card and find books to check out.