

Third grade is a pivotal year for your child. Learning to read with fluency and confidence will serve as a foundation for the reading demands in later grades. By practicing with learning-to-read strategies, your child will reliably be able to make sense of **multi-syllable** words in books. He or she will come to appreciate that words have meanings that are not literal (e.g., a piece of cake) and have relationships to other words (e.g., company and companion). Recognizing and understanding words will help your child read increasingly challenging stories and books and build knowledge about the world around him or her. By the end of the year, your child also will be writing clear sentences and paragraphs on a range of topics, drawing on an expanding vocabulary.

Skills Your Child Will Be Working On

- Reading closely to find main ideas and supporting details in a story
- Describing the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in stories (e.g., first, second, third; cause and effect)
- Comparing the most important points and key details presented in two books on the same topic
- Writing opinions or explanations that group related information and develop topics with facts and details
- Writing stories that establish a situation and include details and clear sequences of events that describe the actions, thoughts, and feelings of characters
- Independently conducting short research projects that build knowledge about various topics
- Asking and answering questions about information he or she hears from a speaker or while participating in classroom discussions, offering appropriate elaboration and detail that build on what others have said
- Reading stories and poems aloud fluently, without pausing to figure out what each word means
- Distinguishing the literal and nonliteral meanings of words, such as something's fishy and cold shoulder
- Spelling correctly and consulting dictionaries to clarify meanings of words

Learning Activity to Use at Home

READING ACTIVITY

Reading with smoothness and good expression is important for good **fluency**. Select a picture book where you can easily model smooth and fluent reading for your child. One that has dialogue between characters is often a good choice. Model reading a sentence or two smoothly and using good expression. Change your voice to indicate different speakers so that your child clearly understands who is speaking. After you have modeled reading a couple of sentences orally for your child, ask your child to read the same sentences, modeling your fluency and expression as much as possible. Continue to coach each set of sentences until the child can read the sentences easily and with good expression.

WRITING ACTIVITY

Talk with your child on how to handle different situations. Provide them with a challenging situation, such as, "what would you do if an older student or child teased you in a hurtful way" (i.e. made fun of your hair/glasses, etc.). Ask your child to write about the situation and to describe several events that might unfold. Provide some examples of how to share different feelings and thoughts, ("I feel really sad because..."). Encourage your child to use dialogue to provide more detail and insight. After writing the story, review with your child on how to handle the situation positively and give helpful suggestions if necessary.

Teacher and Parent Conferencing - Topics for ongoing conversations throughout the school year with your child's teacher.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In third grade, these include:

- Is your child reading on grade-level orally with accuracy and **fluency** to support comprehension
- Is your child developing academic vocabulary used across all subject and content areas
- Is your child writing and speaking well, with a focus on informative/**explanatory** texts to examine or convey ideas and information clearly.

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?