*Berkshire Middle School*

**Help Your Middle Schooler Become a Great Reader!**

Read aloud every day. Reading aloud provides a good model, expands vocabulary, stimulates curiosity and imagination, lengthens attention spans, and motivates your child to want to read better books independently. Most important of all, it helps to develop a lifetime reader. Be sure to “ham it up” when reading aloud-read with lots of expression!

Share reading with your child by alternate reading. You read a page and then your child reads a page. Or you read a paragraph and your child reads a paragraph.

Be aware that your child’s reading level and listening level are different.

-Read easy books *with* your child.

-Read more advanced books *to* your child to instill motivation and a love of books.

Read aloud the first few chapters of a book to get him or her started. This is where the characters are introduced, the plot is set up, and the setting is described. You’ll be offering a jump start!

Discuss the book you’re reading together:

-Predict what the book will be about before reading it.

-Talk about the pictures.

-Periodically stop and predict what will happen next.

-Consider what else could have happened.

-Relate the story to your own experiences.

-Stop to explain things that you think your child does not know.

-Talk about the author and illustrator.

Carry books with you wherever you go; read to your child while waiting for appointments, for example.

Take time each day for everyone in the family to read silently; show you value reading by allowing your child to see you read.

Encourage your child to keep a journal by recording the day’s happenings, his or her feelings, etc.

Provide pencils, pens, crayons, markers, paper, and other materials for your child to use to express feelings and thoughts about what they read.

Give your child his or her own library card for the public library; visit the library often.

Write notes to your child and tuck them into a lunch box, backpack, or pocket.

Simply enjoy reading with your child!

Talk to your child about what reading means. Often, children are so focused on the skill that they don’t focus on the thinking. Simple, but true. Good [decoding skills](http://blog.penningtonpublishing.com/reading/top-ten-reasons-to-teach-phonics/) are not an end in themselves, but should make reading for meaning effortless. Tell your child, “When you are reading, concentrate on what the person is saying to you.” Teach your child to pause after each sentence to ask and answer that question. Transition to the paragraph.

Tell your child to make a movie in his or her head while reading. Visualization is a powerful aid to reading comprehension for both narrative and expository (informational) text.

Many children fail to comprehend text because they daydream as they read. In other words, they lose attention to the text. Students who use self-questioning strategies develop a greater understanding of the text than passive readers. Teach your child how to use the \***Scrip Reading Strategies.**  Each strategy emphasizes internal self-monitoring of text.

Poor readers often just don’t know what good readers do as they silently read.  Show your child what a good reader does by using \***Think-Alouds**in which the parent reads silently out loud as described below. Emphasize how quickly the brain makes these applications so that reading continuity is not compromised. We use this strategy in our classroom on a regular basis.

*\*Here’s how to set-up an effective****Think-Aloud****with your child:*

1. Select a short reading with a beginning, middle, and an end.

2. Tell students that they are about to enter a strange new world; it is a world of your thoughts as a reader. Tell them that your thoughts will not be the same thoughts as theirs.

3. Tell them that reading is not just pronouncing words; it is making meaning out of what the author has written. Tell them that they can improve their reading comprehension.

4. Begin reading the text for a few lines and then alter your voice (raise the pitch, lower the volume, or use an accent) to model what you are thinking. Stop and explain what the voice altering meant and keep this voice altering consistent throughout the Think-Aloud.

5. Keep your thoughts concise and on the focus of the reading. Don’t ramble on with personal anecdotes. Comment much more on the text than on your personal connection with the text.

6. Don’t over-do the amount of your Think-Aloud thoughts. Once every paragraph or two is about right. Don’t interrupt the flow of the reading and lose sight of the textual meaning.

7. Talk to the text and to the author.

8. Ask students if they think they understood the text better because of your verbalized thoughts than just by passively reading without active thoughts. Their answer will be “Yes,” if you have done an effective Think-Aloud.

9. Have students practice their own Think-Alouds in pairs.

10. Repeat Think-Alouds often with both narrative and expository texts.

Adapted from:

*The Reading Specialist, Second Edition: Leadership for the Classroom, School and Community*

*Pennington Publishing Log* *“How to Improve Reading Comprehension Using the SCRIP Comprehension Strategies”*