

TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

READING WITH KIDS OF ALL AGES

Summer is a great time to help your kids discover, or rediscover reading for pleasure. No matter what their reading level, you can make “shared reading times” to help develop their reading interest. Here are tips of how to make the best of this family activity:

Choose reading that the child likes – it may be a picture book or a biography, or for a teen, it might be a romance or an adventure. Some kids are overwhelmed by the size of a book, but would enjoy a short story or article. One young person played video games a lot and his grandmother found articles about video games. You can find reading materials in many places: libraries, yard sales, book sales, printed off the Internet and book stores. Think about what interests your child and find materials on those topics.

Share reading in a way that helps the child build confidence rather than pointing out mistakes. Remember the goal of this reading is to build enthusiasm for reading, and you do not need to focus on building skills. Once a child is enthusiastic, building skills will follow. A child who feels successful will want to read again.

Shared reading means that during a quiet time, you and the child read together. It may be that the child listens and you read, or the child reads and you listen, or you take turns. For older children who can only read short amounts, you might read two pages and then the child reads a paragraph. You can also just look at pictures and fill in what you think the story will be about. This might be a good bridge to the book or magazine for children who do not like reading. Focus on the child without distraction, through this activity the child learns that reading is important.

One family says that their now adult children still remember that time they went camping and it rained all week. They loved sitting in the car and reading a mystery out loud. Everyone tried to guess what would happen next. The kids didn’t know that the grandparents came up with this idea in a moment of desperation trying to find something to do on vacation in the rain. They all remember it as a great family time.

Here are some additional suggestions to help your child become a better reader:

- Picture Reading – Ask questions about the pictures or have your child tell a story just by looking at the pictures. Books with lots of pictures such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* are good for this strategy.
- Sighting – Before reading a page or passage, ask your child to find punctuation marks, certain words, specific letters, or the smallest or largest word.
- Guide your child through a familiar book with the child filling in repeated phrases.
- Echo Reading - Read a passage and have your child read it back to you.
- Unison Reading – Both you and your child read the same passage aloud at the same time.
- Whisper Reading – Read very quietly into your child’s ear while the child reads aloud.
- Turns Reading - You and your child take turns reading, choose a signal to show that it’s time to switch.
- Solo Reading – your child reads completely independently to you.
- Actually create books that include art work and writing with your child - folded paper, pencils and staples are all you need.
- Have lots of books available.
- Let your child see *you* reading.
- Most importantly, **LET READING BE FUN!**

For more information on reading strategies, look online or call Janelle at Maine Kids-Kin and ask her to send some articles to you. You can also ask your local librarian.

*Copies of our tip sheets may be found on our web site at www.mainekids-kin.org
This tip sheet was brought to you with help from the Cooperative Extension System
and The University of Maine System. www.extension.org*