

Read With Your Child and Help Them Do Better In School

By Anne Broderius, West Elementary Principal

This is the time of year when parents inquire about how they can best prepare their child for the start of Kindergarten. The best advice I can give is to Read – Read – Read. As a parent you can never read to a child too early in life (start when they are babies) or too often. The early years are so critical to a lifelong love for reading and is truly the foundation of success in school and in life. The main goal is to help your child become a happy and confident reader, so he or she will continue to learn and grow. Parents and caregivers play an important role in helping a child on the road to be a successful reader.

Here are some parent-tested ideas on how to help your child be a successful reader and student.

- **Read Together Every Day:** Make your time together with books fun and enjoyable. Let your child know how much you enjoy reading with them (even if they request the same book over and over again) and most importantly, make it the best part of your day together. Have fun with your voice while reading. Make the characters and the story come alive. It's important for your child to see and touch the books. They might even want to look at books on their own. Reading to self is an important skill too.
- **Build Your Child's Vocabulary:** Talk about everything and give everything a name. If your child expresses interest in something, find a book to learn more about it. Some families even label things throughout the home to encourage reading, such as the door, window, clock, sink, etc. In addition, ask your child questions, and provide lots of language when talking about things around you. A strong vocabulary is one of the strongest predictors of later reading comprehension.
- **Sing and Rhyme With Your Child:** Educators are discovering children are not hearing or familiar with some of the traditional nursery rhymes. Hearing and maybe even memorizing familiar nursery rhymes is not only a fun shared experience between parents and children, but it is an easy way to develop phonemic awareness (hearing of sounds) and helps to build the oral language skills necessary for school success in reading, writing, and speaking. Learning one or two rhymes each week during the summer before the start of Kindergarten will support your child's ability to hear and play with sounds and words.
- **Model Reading and Writing:** Make sure your child gets to see you reading for enjoyment or to learn something new. Children learn from watching the adults in their world. Make lists together for trips to the grocery store or have them help cut out coupons for some of their favorite items. When in the store, help them match the letters or pictures for the items. Encourage your child to write and draw on their own. Provide a variety of kid friendly materials for them to use. Have them make their own lists and write thank you letters or journal events from their day.

Leading your child to love reading is one of the most important things a parent can do to help their child do well in school. If you have questions or concerns about your child's development, please contact West Elementary.