

IMPROVING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

By Amanda Bishop, School Psychologist

READING

Since reading is the fundamental skill that can predict how well your child will do academically, it is worthwhile for you to keep close tabs on your child's progress. Keeping in mind what is developmentally appropriate for his/her age and what has been taught in school, you should be concerned when your child:

- Does not seem to be making progress in reading
- Avoids reading
- Regularly complains that reading is too hard
- Notices that other children are reading significantly better than he/she is
- Seems to learn words one day and forget them the next day or the next week
- Has difficulty following a story when you read to him/her and can't answer basic questions about it
- Seems to read significantly slower than others of his/her age
- Regularly reports he/she can't remember what is read

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO MAKE READING PLEASURABLE?

● Have a daily reading time using books that are at your child's reading level and of interest to your child. Your child's teacher/media center specialist can help you find these books. If your child is a beginning reader (or even when he/she is a good reader), reading aloud to your child makes reading fun.

● To make reading time more enjoyable and less frustrating for your child, you can take turns reading sentences, paragraphs or pages.

● Daily drill (flash cards) on high frequency words will allow your child to read more fluently and give them more confidence. These words can be obtained from the teacher.

● When your child comes across a word he/she does not know, allow five seconds for him/her to figure it out. If he/she does not get the word, tell him/her the word. It is important to be aware that too much time spent trying to figure out unknown words may detract from comprehension as well as from the enjoyment of reading.

● Rereading a book is fine if your child wants to. Practice is confidence-building. The whole idea is to make reading an enjoyable, shared learning experience.

(Source: *Solve Your Child's School-Related Problems*. National Association of School Psychologists; Editors, M. Martin & C. Greenwood.)

- To increase interest in reading activities, play computer games that require reading to progress from one stage to another.
- To increase interest in reading, encourage your child to read simple stories to his/her younger siblings. Books using repetitive language would be appropriate.
- Provide opportunities in the home for functional reading, such as reading recipes, directions, catalogues, or television guides.
- To help with comprehension, have your child retell a story you read to him/her and make predictions of what will happen next. In the upper grades, ask your child to paraphrase after each paragraph in the content area subjects.
- Teach your child how to set a purpose for reading by turning chapter subheadings into questions and then reading to find answers.

(Source: *Solve Your Child's School-Related Problems*. National Association of School Psychologists; Editors, M. Martin & C. Greenwood.)