

## Selecting Texts

Proficient readers should be encouraged to read a wide variety of texts. By providing access to texts at home parents can encourage their child to widen their selections.

Talk about some of the reasons for reading, such as enjoyment or information. Also talk about the different ways different texts are read, e.g. *skimming the headlines in the newspaper, reading instructions about how to use an appliance in detail.*

Some of the reading materials that could be provided include any of the following.

- Everyday texts such as magazines, advertising brochures, newspapers, dictionaries and reference books.
- Books that have been made into films and videos. Read the book and watch the video together. Talk about the differences between the book and video or film, e.g. *“What were your impressions of how the film producer represented the book?”*
- Informational texts such as directions to operate household appliances, instructions for computer games and recipe books.
- Different versions of the same story or event, e.g. *reports in magazines, the newspaper and on television.*
- CD-ROMS and web sites.
- Texts by favourite authors that you both enjoy. Talk about why you like them.

Encourage your child to share texts with other family members.



## Sharing a Love of Reading

There are many ways to encourage your child to broaden their reading and for you to share your love of reading with each other. Try any of the following suggestions.

- Subscribe to a magazine of your child's choice.
- Buy books and magazines as gifts.
- Have available a selection of texts such as novels by favourite authors, comics, magazines, informational texts and reference materials.
- Have a special place for each person in the family to keep their books.
- Set aside a time for reading, thus modelling good reading habits for your child.
- Encourage all family members and visitors to participate in reading or being read to.
- Share your personal reading choices. Tell your child why you have chosen that particular text, article or magazine.
- Demonstrate an interest in what your child is reading. Ask why they have chosen that particular text.
- Ask your child to recommend books for you to read.
- Encourage your child to select their own books and magazines.
- Encourage the exchange of books with friends and other family members.
- Talk about anything you have been reading whenever the time is appropriate.
- Read the same novel as your child and discuss it together. This helps build thoughtful, insightful readers.
- Display your own collection of books. Discuss why you liked or disliked any of the books. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Encourage your child to visit the library often to check out a variety of texts to sustain their interest.
- Provide access to a computer, either at home or the local library, so your child can make use of the Internet.
- Take the family on trips that may create interest in particular topics, e.g. *visit museums and art galleries.*

## Supporting Comprehension

Talking to your child about what they have been reading independently or what you have been reading together is a wonderful opportunity to make connections with your lives, develop concepts and understandings and talk about opinions and reactions. Different types of questions and involvement in discussions will allow your child to respond to texts, build concepts, clarify meaning, explore issues, share perspectives and refine thinking.

### *Literal Questions*

Literal level questions focus on what was said. The answer is 'right there' in the text, illustrations or diagrams. It is helpful to follow up these types of questions with further discussion that requires your child to clarify and substantiate their answer.

### *Inferential Questions*

The answers to inferential questions can be found in the text but not necessarily in the one place. Your child has to 'put the answer together' from various sections of the text or even between two different texts, e.g. "How was ... similar to or different from ...?"

### *Interpretive Questions*

Interpretive questions require your child to base the answer on the text but also draw on their own previous experiences to reach an answer, e.g. "From what you know about ... was ... a good idea?"

### *Critical or Evaluative Questions*

These questions go beyond the text, asking for the child's own opinions or judgements. The text provides a starting point for discussions about the underlying messages or themes in the text, e.g. "What is your reaction to...? What is your opinion about ...?"

Book discussions should be a fun way for you and your child to explore the text and to stimulate further discussions.

## Helping with Research Work

Support and encouragement will be your most important contribution when your child is completing school research. This means guiding, advising and talking things through with them. Ensure the final product reflects your child's individual effort and design. If you feel tempted to do the research yourself, ask, "Will this help my child to learn?"

As a parent you can:

- suggest topics for research
- discuss where information may be found and how to get it, e.g. *mailing, emailing, downloading*
- help locate appropriate information by taking your child to the library, museum or university
- provide access to the Internet or reference books either at home or from the local library
- discuss the topic with your child so they can jot down ideas or questions
- discuss whether the information the child has found is relevant and if so, how will it be used
- help your child organise and group information into categories
- ask questions which encourage your child to explore the topic further, e.g. "*Have you looked at the environmental issue from all angles?*"
- encourage your child to use the following procedure when taking notes:
  - short notes: jot down key words and phrases with the reference material open
  - long notes: close the reference material and use the short notes to make sentences
- discuss the best way to present the research work, e.g. *poster, tape recording, model, PowerPoint presentation*
- assist with technical work such as photography or construction.



## Using the Library

Visiting the library is a great way to encourage your child's reading and learning as well as providing an opportunity for you to show that you value books and reading.

- Make library visits a regular activity for the whole family.
- Encourage your child to keep library books in a safe place while on loan.
- Get a library card for yourself, your child and other members of the family.
- Encourage your child to use the library to locate texts using the cataloguing system or computer.
- Help your child determine if the library has the resources needed or whether other information sources should be found.
- Check out the special services, e.g. *homework hotlines, study groups*, your library offers for helping with school assignments.
- Log on to your library's home page. Many of today's libraries have their own sites on the World Wide Web. Here you can find listings of everything in the library's collection, including whether an item is checked in or out.

