



# Choosing Appropriate Reading Materials and Activities for Your Beginning Reader

Learning to read is an exciting milestone for a child and his parents. However, it can be confusing and overwhelming to choose appropriate books for a new reader. To help parents, The Library has created four categories of easy reading books, used by reading specialists in the West Bloomfield school district: pre-emergent, emergent, early fluent, and fluent. This brochure gives a brief description of these categories as well as simple activities you can do with your child at home to encourage him to develop into a proficient reader who loves books. Always ask a librarian if you have any questions!!

**PRE-EMERGENT**-The books in this section are identified by a white label on the spines. Pre-emergent books are for beginning readers. They contain few words, large print, and large pictures.

**Children at the pre-emergent stage of reading will exhibit most of these skills:**

- Aware that text should be read from left to right
- Realizes that print words have meaning
- Knows pictures can help decode the words

## **Try This At Home:**

- Read poetry and word pattern books. Books with repetition, rhymes, and patterns such as *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?* by Eric Carle help children hear the sounds within words (phonemic awareness).
- Read lots of Mother Goose rhymes. Nursery rhymes help children hear the rhythm and rhyme of language. For variety, try clapping out the rhymes as you read them.
- Use alphabet books to demonstrate words that are the same and different in their beginning and ending sounds.

**EMERGENT**-Emergent reading books have orange letters on the spine. These books have more text than pre-emergent; yet still have repetition of vocabulary and larger print and text spacing.

**Emergent Skills:**

- Beginning to memorize sight words (a, an, the. . .)
- Sounding out the beginning and ending of simple words
- Starting to self-correct reading errors
- Beginning to use chunks: -s, -es, -ing, -er, etc.

## **Try This at Home:**

- Ask questions as you read to check for and encourage comprehension. “Why did Johnny cry?” “How would you feel if that happened to you?” “What do you think will happen next?” “How do you think this story will end?”
- Rewrite the story with your child with a different ending that he likes. Let him or her illustrate story. Changing a story helps to spark imagination and creativity.
- As you read a book with your child, follow the text with your finger. This will show your child how a sentence progresses and what various punctuation marks are used for. Additionally, read with expression, emphasizing and exaggerating questions marks, exclamation marks, commas, etc.



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**EARLY FLUENT**—These books have a green label on the spine. You will notice that these books have smaller print, fewer pictures, and more advanced vocabulary.

### Early Fluent skills:

- Reads smoothly with few mistakes (stops sometimes to sound out words)
- Continues to use pictures (though less often) and context clues from the sentence to figure out the meaning of a story
- Starts to read with expression and is able to pause for most punctuation marks

### Try This At Home:

- Let your child pick out books even when they aren't classics. Indulge his taste for books about sports, Scooby Doo, or Spongebob!
- Read everywhere you go: street signs, movie posters, billboards, and food containers. This helps children see that reading is important in everyday life.
- Write a book of "favorite things". Staple together ten blank pages and ask your child to think of ten favorite things. Give him ideas: favorite foods, friends, movies, and books. Write one word on each page and have your child draw a picture, or cut out pictures from magazines.

**FLUENT**—These books are identified with a blue label on the spine. Most of the fluent books also have a red sticker indicating that they are chapter books, with chapter divisions (a big deal for children!). These books have more challenging ideas, extended episodes and actions, and more complex vocabulary.

### These are characteristics of a fluent reader:

- Reads smoothly with few, or no breaks
- Reads chapter books and can fully comprehend most or all of the story
- Asks the meaning of an unknown word and usually remembers it for future use
- Reads aloud expressively throughout story with a full understanding of punctuation and rhythm

### Try This At Home:

- Continue to expose your advanced reader to poetry (Shel Silverstein, Jeff Moss) as it reinforces the rhythm of language and stimulates imagination.
- Encourage your reader to read longer books. Lengthier books encourage children to recall what was read (characters, events) and to predict what might come next.
- Expose your reader to materials such as newspapers and magazines. Especially beneficial are children's magazines such as *Time for Kids*, *National Geographic for Kids*, *American Girl*, *Highlights*, and assorted sporting titles. There are also various on-line sites such as *Time for Kids* ([www.timeforkids.com](http://www.timeforkids.com)), *Sports Illustrated for Kids* ([www.sikids.com](http://www.sikids.com)), and *American Girl* ([www.americangirl.com](http://www.americangirl.com)) that are free and lots of fun!



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