

## Reading and your child

I have to agree with JK Rowling when she says, “**I will defend the importance of bedtime stories to my last gasp.**” Reading stories to my children before bed was one of my favourite things to do. We started with simple board and picture books, moving to more complex picture books, school readers, then to easy chapter books and to chapter books. Now we share the books we read. I often read their school novels too. Even though they are now teenagers we still have some family traditions where we read. Each Christmas Eve we squeeze onto the lounge and I read them the Christmas story!

As a teacher I understood the importance of reading with and to children, but as a parent I have seen firsthand how it opens the door to a love of learning and a world of imagination.

**"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents." — Emilie Buchwald**

Pre-reading and writing skills are critical to your child’s later success in learning to read and write at school. There are 5 important skills a child needs to have success at reading.

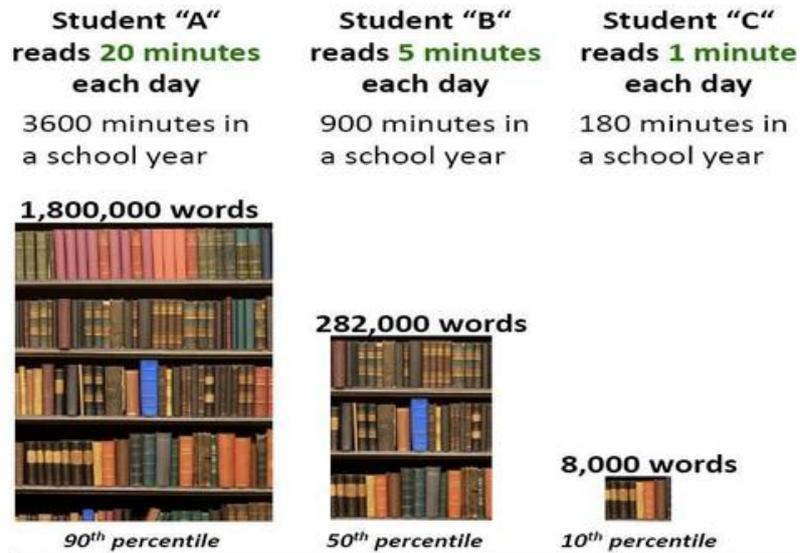
1. **Book and print awareness.** This means understanding how a book is held, how to turn the pages, the front, back, the author and the illustrator.
2. **Listening, comprehension and vocabulary skills.** This is understanding what they have heard and building a wide range of words and their meaning, which they can later use orally or in written stories. Read lots of books! Read the same books again and again, read new books, go to story time at the library and borrow books from the Duck Library at Preschool.
3. **Phonological Awareness** is the ability to hear different sounds in words, including syllables and rhymes. Rhyming songs and books are great for this. Talk about the rhyme and how it sounds the same. E.g. “ten and men”
4. **Motivation to read.** Your child’s willingness to read is influenced by your attitude to books and reading. Make it fun!! Act out the stories, do silly voices, ask questions about the book, model reading.
5. **Letter Knowledge.** This is identifying the letters of the alphabet and knowing their sounds. There are lots of fun ways you can do this; practise writing their name, identify letters from their name in the environment, use magnetic letters on your fridge, play I spy with sounds....

**"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go." — Dr. Seuss**



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## Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?



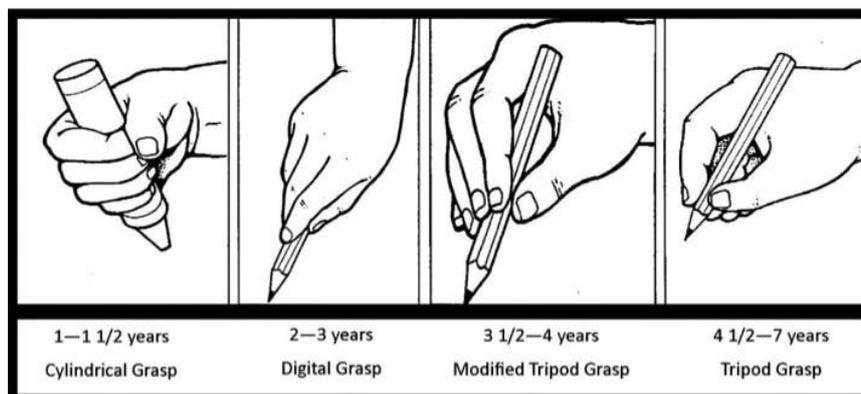
By the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)

Alongside reading is writing. Writing skills develop as children develop their fine motor skills (small muscles). This is done through playing with Duplo, building with blocks, playing with playdough, using pegs, threading beads, drawing and cutting. Over time child's fine motor skills strengthen as does their pencil grip and interest in mark making, drawing and then writing. The first word a child often writes is their name. This is an exciting milestone for all!

It is important to use only a capital letter at the start of their name. E.g. *Jenny*

This is a helpful chart to help understand pencil control and pencil grip.



Enjoy reading and writing with your child and celebrate their attempts and achievements!

*Jenny*



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