

## Suggestions for Parents

★ **Make sure your child chooses appropriate books to read by herself.**

For independent reading, children should be encouraged to read books that they can read fluently, or smoothly, and can understand well by themselves. A good way to tell if a book is at an appropriate level for your child is to listen to her reading a full page aloud. If she reads smoothly, makes no errors or just a couple of errors in reading the words, and can tell you about what she read, then the book is probably at a "just right" level for her. If her reading sounds choppy, she struggles to read words, or she does not understand what she has read, try an easier book.

★ **Help your child develop an independent reading routine that will last a lifetime.**

Many second- and third-grade teachers make 20 to 30 minutes of independent reading a regular part of homework because it is important for children's reading development. If your child's teacher requires quiet reading as homework, help your child "budget" his time and figure out when he will complete it. Many children enjoy doing their free reading at a particular time and in a special spot in the house, whether it is on their bed or in the living room. If your child's teacher does not require independent reading, you might make it an expectation in your house.

★ **Help your child discover the resources available in your local library.**

When children at this age visit the library regularly, they get valuable assistance in finding new books to read. They also begin to see libraries as a source of information about topics that interest them. They may even learn some specific library skills, such as how to look up a title on a computerized catalog.

★ **Show your child that you are a reader by reading yourself.**

When children see that their parents choose to read, they are more likely to value and enjoy reading themselves. One way busy parents can accomplish this goal is to read at the same time their children read as part of their homework. Whether you read the newspaper, a good novel, a magazine, or some papers for work, just reading alongside your child will encourage her to keep on reading.

★ **Listen to your child read to help him develop fluency.**

Children become fluent readers through lots and lots of practice. Make it a point to listen to your child read to you every so often. If your child makes a mistake when reading, encourage him to try and fix it himself by asking, "Did that make sense?" or "Should you reread that part?" To help your child read with greater expression and fluency, try reading and rereading plays and poetry together.