

Facilitator notes for Come Read with Me

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As parents, we want our children to be successful. And we want to know how to best support their learning at home. The good news is that it is not your job to teach your children how to read, that's why teachers are here. Your job is to help them catch a love of reading, while supporting what they are learning in the classroom. "Children are made readers on the laps of their parents."

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So why do we care about reading anyway? Well, literacy is everywhere! We are surrounded by information every day that we need to make sense of – in books, on screens, on signs and labels. What is important is not just that we are able to read the words, but that we understand them. In fact, how well we read is the number one indicator of success for how well our children will do in school, maybe even in life!

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Today you will learn some tips to keep home reading a fun and positive experience for both you and your child.

Learning to read is hard enough.

As Jim Trelease wrote in his book, *The Read- Aloud Handbook*, "*We must take care that children's early encounters with reading are painless enough so they will cheerfully return to the experience now and forever. But if it's repeatedly painful, we will end up creating a school-time reader instead of a lifetime reader.*"

We all know people who only read when they have to. We want our children to want to read for fun and for information.

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When we know how to read, it's hard to remember what it was like not to be able to read. Try reading this now. You probably need some help. When your children are learning to read, this is what the words on a page may look like to them. It's like code and they have to figure out how to crack the code!

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Sam. This is Sam. Sit Sam.

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A long time ago, some clever folk created 26- ABC letter alphabet which is our code to represent all the sounds of our language. Sounds in spoken words match directly to letters in written words.

Your child needs to learn that the word duck has 3 sounds duh-uh-kuh (none of which is quack) and that the letters D-U-CK represent those sounds which together say “duck.” If you add a picture of a duck, it helps them know what that word means.

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Unfortunately, English has a complex code and can seem like a crazy language. There are many ways to spell the same sound and sometimes many sounds for the same spelling, just think of the “ough” words and the many ways the “oo” sound can be spelled. It can be frustrating, but it is also exciting to crack the code! About half of the words in English are regular and easy to decode and most of the others, although tricky, are partly decodable. It does require lots of practice and patience!

The light bulb moment for our children is when they understand that the words on the page are just talk written down.

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Ultimately, we read to make sense of text. We need to be thinking about what we are reading and understanding it. When your preschooler sees the STOP sign, they know that means you must stop long before they are able to read the letters in the word. Children need to be taught the code, they need to be able to blend the sounds together to make a word, and then they need to be able “make a leap” to a known word that makes sense in the story. They can only do this if they already have most of the words in our heads and know what they mean.

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That is why it is so important for you to talk up a storm with your child and to read to them for as long as they will allow you too. You can read books that are at a much higher level than they can read, so you are expanding their knowledge of the world and their vocabulary which will help them on their own reading journey. When your child chooses a book that is too hard for them to read alone, read it to them or with them, so they can still enjoy the story and understand it. This is true for older children too.

Their teacher is likely sending home “just right” books for them to practice what they are learning in school. These are books that they can read all or most of the words, giving them lots of opportunities to use the new phonics they are learning at school.

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You will also want to read other books with your child. When your child is choosing a book to read, encourage them to think about these questions:

- Am I interested in this book? Do I even want to read it? The best book is the one your child wants to read.

- Do I know what this book is about? We want them to be thinking about what they are reading, not just reading the words to get the book done.
- Can I read most of the words? If there are too many unknowns, then they can't read fluently, and will lose comprehension. That is a book you read to them or with them.

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Once they've chosen a book to read, before they start reading it, warm it up. When you are warming up a book with your child, you are setting them up for success. Get them curious about the story and thinking about it before they start reading it. Let's watch a video to see how to do this.

VIDEO

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For non-fiction or science/fact books, use what we call the **K-W-L**. Talk about what you already **KNOW**. Then ask them what they **WONDER** or want to know. Share something you wonder about too. After you've read a bit, talk about some of the new things you have **LEARNED**. This strategy makes reading meaningful. We are reading this book because we want to learn more about something.

If your child is interested in a subject, they can probably read a higher-level book because they already have a lot of knowledge about it.

Let's watch a video to see how to do this.

VIDEO

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Learning to read is like learning any new skill. Just like when your child is learning how to ride a two-wheeler, you don't just put them on the bike at the top of the hill and say "Okay buddy, I'll pick you up at the bottom." They will likely wipe out, and never want to ride a bicycle again. It's the same with reading. We want to first help build their skills by encouraging and supporting them, so they have the confidence to try it alone and be successful. (Remember how it felt when you were looking at that code story!)

There are many ways to enjoy a book together. Sometimes, a beginning reader has to work really hard to decode words in a book. If the book is too hard for them to read themselves, you can just look at the pictures and talk about the story or you can **read the book to them**. It is not cheating!

Another fun way to read a book that has rhyme and repetition, like Dr Seuss books, is to read together. The focus is more on fluency and comprehension. You might read a page or two together, and then let them try it on their own.

For younger students, **My Turn/ Your Turn** or **Echo** reading is a helpful strategy. You read the sentence or passage first and then they read the same sentence or passage. You are modelling how it should sound, stopping at periods and reading with expression. You may use your finger to track the words when you are reading, and encourage your child to do the same, hop gently over each word as they read them. Read the whole sentence first, not word by word, as this breaks up fluency and comprehension.

It's okay to read the same book many times. These are supportive strategies that build fluency and confidence and help with comprehension and the enjoyment of reading. They need lots of support to set them up for reading success and increase their reading motivation and confidence.

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Reader's theatre is another fun way to read a book with dialogue and really brings the print to life.

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When your child is reading, they are going to make mistakes. We do want what they read to match the text, but it is also important that they are connecting with their reading, and making sense of it. Sometimes, for the sake of fluency, comprehension and enjoyment, it's okay to let a small mistake go. If they are making lots of mistakes, we need to prompt them to try again. We want their growing brains to make the correct links between the words they say and how they look. This helps them remember how to read and write words successfully.

But **pause** first, give them enough time to problem solve on their own. Our instinct is to jump in and help and give them the word but it is important to give them time to try to figure out the word themselves without getting too frustrated. If they self-correct, that's great, because it tells you they are doing the work and thinking about what they are reading. **Praise** them for figuring it out themselves.

Just remember you don't want to sound like the Taboo buzzer – eh, eh, eh, - no, no, no! Think how that makes your child feel? Painful experience = reluctant reader.

PAUSE-PROMPT-PRAISE doesn't come naturally to most of us.

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When prompting beginning readers, we suggest you start by touching the word and encouraging them to look carefully at the word first, asking them to check if the word looks right, do the letters match what they said, before asking them to look at the picture or think of a word that would make sense or sound right.

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Let's look at an example to see how we can prompt helpfully.

The sentence says:

The boy rode the horse.

Your child reads, "The boy rode the **house**."

You pause to see if they self-correct but if they don't, you say, "Let's look at that word. Does that look right? Does it make sense? He rode the house?"

If your child reads, "The boy **rided** the horse."

You pause, and then say, "Let's look at that word. Does that look right? Does it sound right? Do you say you rided your bike?"

If your child reads, "The boy **fed** the horse."

You pause first, then say, "Let's look at that word. Does that look right? Do the letters match with the word you said?"

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On the back of your bookmark, you will see other strategies they can use when they need help figuring out a word. Many, not all teachers, use these strategies. A grade 1 reader will focus mostly on the first four.

- Look at the letter clues and try to sound it out.
- Go back and read it again. Rereading is like listening again. Does it sound right? Does it make sense? It helps them leap from an almost right word to the actual word.
- Encourage them to think about a word that they know and that would make sense and match the letters
- Look at the pictures. The pictures are there to give you clues to the words.
- Look for small words in big words. Break down the word into smaller chunks or words that they might know - like "go-ing"
- Let them know that it is okay to skip a word and read the next few words because sometimes those words help you figure out what the word is.

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What is important is that they **understand** what they are reading, and it makes sense to them. Comprehension is the whole point of reading after all!

We want to be talking about the book before we start reading it, while we are reading it and after we have read it. Make it a conversation, not a quiz. Talk about what is happening; get them to make personal connections, to predict what might happen next. Ask about the

meaning of words. Ask their opinion and share yours too. If it's a non-fiction book, remember to talk about what new things you have learned from the book.

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Games are a great way to make learning fun. When kids are playing games, they don't even realize they are learning. It's a good way to help learn those tricky high frequency words.

High frequency words are words that show up often in text. They are the glue of our language and it is important for our children to learn them. In fact, it's crazy that just 13 little words account for more than 25% of the words in print. Words like the, of, and, that and you. Quite often these words have tricky spelling patterns, like any and does. We want these words to become sight words, words they can read instantly, because the more sight words they have, the less time they spend on decoding and more on comprehending. **Although it may look like they have just memorized the whole word, brain research shows that we still need to scan all letters in the word to make sense of it and commit it to memory.** Any word can become a sight word.

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Let's take a look at what's in your package. You have a set of word cards. This is a sample set of words you can expect your child to know by the end of grade 1. When using these word cards, pay attention to the letters and sounds in the words as this is what helps commit the word to memory. Research shows that we need 10 or fewer encounters to truly learn a word.

You can use the word cards or your child's own word cards to play **Roll-Say-Keep**. Instructions are on the back. Place a word in each square, face-up. Read the words to your child. Then you take turns rolling the dice and have to read the word in the square of the number you rolled. If you get it right, you get to keep it and you put a new word in the square.

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Pig/Stop – explain how to play

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There are two cards for each word. You can play Memory or **Concentration** with these words. There are instructions in the package. Some of these words are easy to decode and some are trickier. Playing a game is a fun way to practice seeing, hearing and saying these words over and over again until they become sight words. You can also make your own word cards. Writing is important for learning how words work and it improves reading. It is also important to give your child opportunities to write the words they are learning by saying the sounds (not the letters) as they write the word. This helps them understand the connection between the sounds in the word and the letters that represent the sounds in the written word.

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Word Tic Tac Toe is also a fun game. As you are reading together, you can print words you want your child to practice in the squares on the game sheet. When you print the words, write in lower case letters. When we print in upper case letters, the shape of every word is the same – a RECTANGLE. When we print in lower case, words have distinct shapes and our brains recognise these shapes. When you are done, then you play X's and O's. You have to read the word before you get to put your X or O on the square. The goal is to get three in a row.

VIDEO

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You can also play **Roll, Pick a letter, Build a word**. Your child has fun playing with the letters in the alphabet and is learning that we need vowels to make words. If you have magnetic letters at home, it's easier for them to move the letters around to make a word, rather than just writing them on paper. For younger children, play the first person to build a three-letter word. Taking turns rolling the dice and picking a letter from under the number you roll. For older children, you can roll the dice six times each, choose six letters and see how many words you can make with those six letters.

VIDEO

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Confidence is the key to success! When we do something well, we are more likely to do it, and the more we do something, the better we get at it. To help our children become lifetime readers, we need reading to be a joyful and meaningful experience. Make it fun, read often, practice patience. Be encouraging.

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Website with videos

Now it is time for you to enjoy spending some time with your child, reading together and maybe playing a word game together. They love the games and are learning while having fun. Before you leave, I have a short evaluation I'd like you to complete. Your comments help me improve this workshop and make it more useful to parents, so I appreciate your honest feedback. Thank you for coming today. Now have some fun with your child.