

Helping Your Child Build Fluency

Echo Reading

A fluent reader is able to read accurately, with appropriate speed and expression. Fluent reading is smooth and effortless. For children learning to read, this takes time and practice. Just like learning to play the piano takes practice to be able to play in rhythm and at the right tempo, learning to read with the right speed and expression also takes practice.

One way to help your child with fluency is to try echo reading with him. As he listens to you and imitates you, he will be able to add more expression to his voice. Echoing a skilled reader helps children gain confidence in reading aloud. It will give your child an opportunity to learn new words and read material that might be too difficult for him to read alone. He also can practice proper phrasing and expression.

Choose something you and your child want to read. A poem would be great to use! Poems are short and children's poetry is such fun! To practice echo reading, read one sentence or phrase to your child. Read it with expression in your voice. Then your child will read the same sentence or phrase when you finish. Continue in this way to the end of the piece. Try it again!

A fun thing to do after reading the poem using the echo method is to read it chorally or together. Use your finger to point at the words for pacing. This also helps your child begin to recognize unfamiliar words in print.

It's valuable for children to do repeated readings of the same text three or four times to help develop their fluency skills. Find ways to have your child read something a second and third time. Echo reading or choral reading might be done again using different voices. You might read in whisper voices or like you are angry or in a very loud voice. You might even perform for the family. Enjoy the poem!

If your child stumbles over new or unfamiliar words, take time to talk about what the words mean and how they are pronounced. Modeling fluent reading through echo reading can be a great help to your child in developing his own fluency. Remember, the goal is for him to sound good, be easy to listen to, and read with enough expression to help the listener understand and enjoy the material.



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