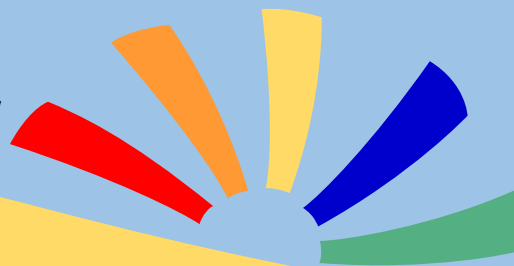


May 2020



#TogetherWeRead – take action to reinforce literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic

During these challenging times with everyone restricted to their homes, it is hard to know what to do or how to help. With the closing of schools, millions of children are missing out on learning.

So how do Rotarians help address this learning gap? We would like to suggest an easy, meaningful, and impactful way that Rotarians can get involved: reading your favorite children's book, recording as you read aloud, and posting it along with other Rotarians. It's easy, it's fun - and it will make a difference!

Reading aloud to children is one of the best ways to promote literacy, develop language skills, and develop critical thinking.

This initiative is an extension of the partnership between Rotary and Save the Children to promote literacy and early childhood education and help close the academic achievement gap, especially for children living in poverty in rural areas.

Our partnership, **Together, We Read**, blends Save the Children's expertise in child literacy programs with Rotary's expertise in advocacy, connecting community leaders, and responding to need.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are shifting our partnership focus from in-person community-based activities, to virtual activities that promote early literacy and prevent children from falling behind.

One way to do this is through virtual reading. LitRAG is extending #TogetherWeRead by inviting Rotarians to join #savewithstories; a partnership between Save the Children and No Kid Hungry. This effort offers stories on Facebook and Instagram to provide literacy support for homebound children and parents. Children love listening to the stories and this can help give parents a break from home school and childcare duties, often on top of juggling working from home. Rotarians can then promote and share #TogetherWeRead with libraries, schools and other programs to enable wide use of this collection of stories.

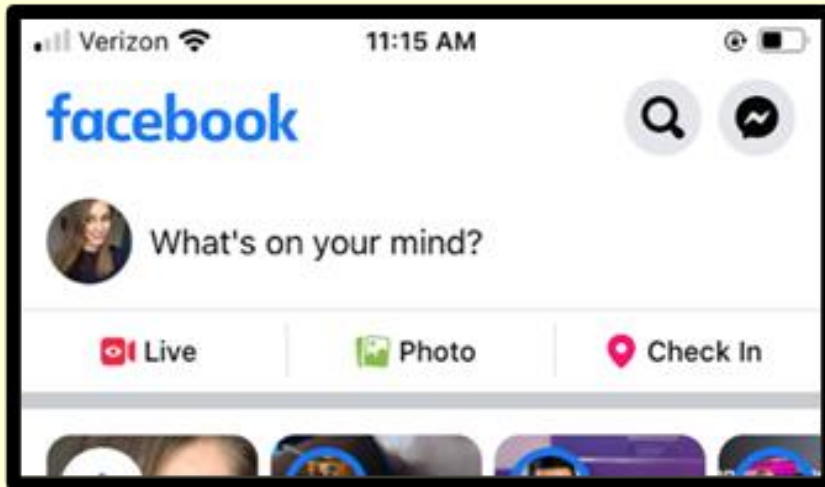
Will you join us? Video yourself reading a story and post it online (instructions below) to #TogetherWeRead and #savewithstories.

Stories in all languages are encouraged so that we can reach more children and families. Once you have made your video, share it via social media to create greater awareness of our partnership with Save the Children. Promote #TogetherWeRead through your club and district social media channels so that parents and teachers are aware of the opportunity to support their children's reading skills.

Be sure to invite Rotaractors and Interactors to get involved – it's a great way for everyone to make a positive difference from their home.

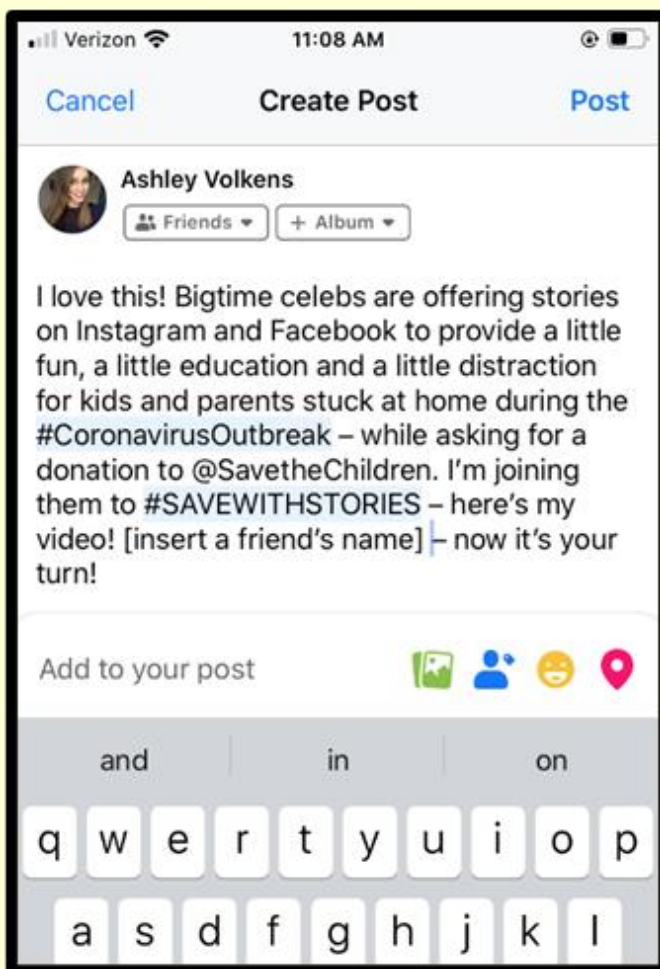
Thank you in advance for your attention to this important initiative. Together we **will** read and do great things to support children's learning in these unprecedented times.

How to Post a Video to Facebook



1) **OPEN FACEBOOK.** Once you have recorded your video on your phone, open your Facebook app.

2) **CLICK** on the words "What's on your mind" at the top of your screen.



3) **TYPE YOUR POST.** You will now be able to type your post. On the next page of this document, we've included a few sample posts that you can copy and paste into this area if you choose. Whether you're copying and pasting the post we provided or you're writing your own post from scratch, there are a few things we are asking you to include.

- ◆ **#SavewithStories** – add the pound sign (#) also known as hash or number sign before the words "savewithstories" (no spaces). If the words become highlighted in blue, you have done it correctly!

- ◆ **Adding #'s enables us to group our work together and links together our stories, organizations and related work. There is no limit to the number of #'s you can include.**

- ◆ Add other relevant hashtags: **#togetherweweread #rotaryreads #peopleofaction.** Your Rotary Club most likely has its own #.

- ◆ **Tag @Save the Children US** – type the "@" symbol first and then start typing the words "Save the Children US". Click on the page that populates below it. This too should become highlighted in blue.

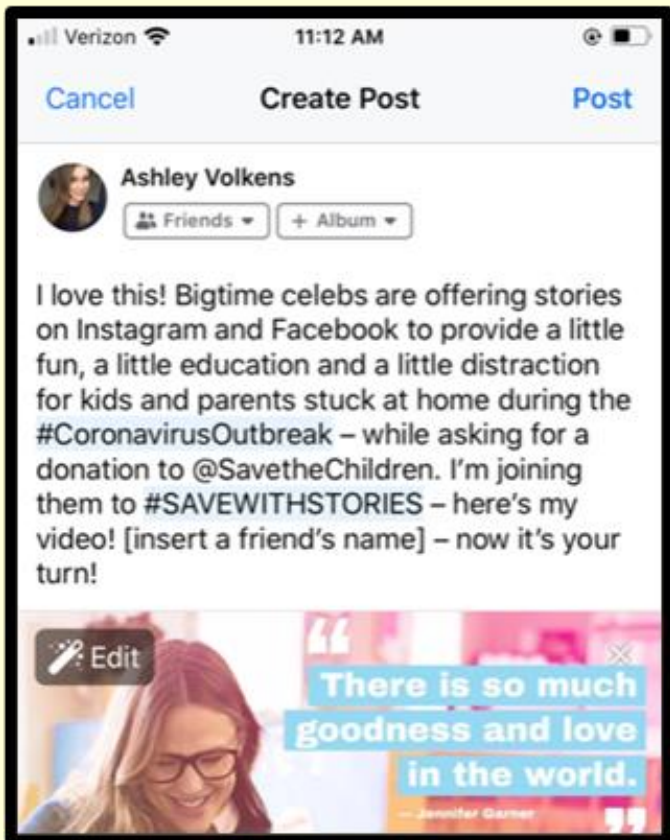
- ◆ **Tag your Facebook friends** – We also encourage you to tag your friends. Just like tagged 'save the children' earlier, type the "@" symbol and then start typing your friend's name.

(Scroll down to see Step 4 on page 3)



4) **ADD YOUR VIDEO** – Click green icon below your post. When you hover with your mouse, the green icon it will read "Photo/Video".

Your camera roll will then open. Click on the video you want to add and then click 'done' in the upper right-hand corner.



5) **POST** – You should now see the video populate under your text you created earlier. After reading your post one more time to make sure that it reads the way you want, click 'post' in the upper right-hand corner of your screen.

SAMPLE SOCIAL POST

Millions of kids are stuck at home because of the #CoronavirusOutbreak. That means no school meals, no books, no classroom time. They need our help.

Join Rotarians and Save the Children **#TOGETHERWEREAD @SavetheChildren** to share great children's stories by video to help schools, families and communities during this time.



Tips for Reading Aloud

Reading to children is one of the best things we can do to develop literacy, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. And, it's a fun activity to do together!

Here are a few tips to make the most of reading aloud - specifically if you're going to video yourself for **#TogetherWeRead** or just helpful reminders for whenever you read aloud to a child!

- 1) Introduce yourself: *(Hi, I'm (first name) and I'm a Rotarian from (location). I'm excited to be reading this story with you today - it's one of my favorites because...)*
- 2) Introduce the book: Say the book title, the author (and the illustrator!)
- 3) Mention something about the cover or the title. Mention something about it that makes you wonder or reminds you about, or something you have done. *(That's quite a crazy bicycle! I love to ride bikes, do you? Let's see what happens.)*
- 4) Read the story and use expression (voices for characters), vary your pace (slower for emphasis, quicker when things are exciting) if that's comfortable for you.



Don't worry if you misread a word or a sentence - just go back and reread it. (Rereading is a great strategy to model for young readers. If readers misread or don't understand something the first time, they read it again).

- 5) Show the pictures to reinforce the message of the text. Take your time so that the child can make connections between what they heard and what they thought about (this gives the child time to confirm or correct understanding and developing critical thinking skills).
- 6) Once or twice, comment on the story or the pictures. Verbalize a thought that comes to you. This is known as modeling what effective readers do: actively thinking about the text. *(Look at that chicken riding the bike - I hope she doesn't fall! I wonder what will happen next! Wow, I didn't expect that to happen!)*
- 7) Briefly comment on the ending. What surprised you about the story? Was there something about the character that you admired? *(Do you think that Nandi was such a good friend to share the fruit with her friends?)*
- 8) Thank the listener. *(Thanks for listening, I hope you enjoyed this story as much as I enjoyed reading it.)*

Enjoy the experience - relax and be natural! Choose a story that you enjoy - for the message, the humor, or the illustrations!

Use these tips as they work for you. Don't worry if you don't use them!

By reading stories aloud, you are sharing the amazing gift of literacy – and caring!



Contributors to Previous LitRAG Awards

South Berwick-Eliot Rotary Club, Maine, USA.

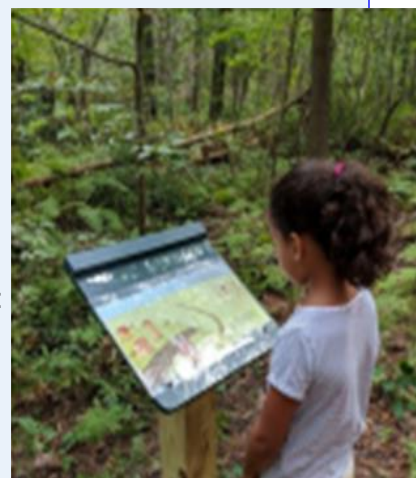
Rotarians organised for children to “take a hike” and explore the park then later do fun exercises in literacy with the environment and map reading.

Contact: Helen Goranson heleng@bondgarden.net

Bahari, Mombasa, Kenya –

A joint program between Rotaractors, Rotarians and teachers to tell stories and play a game called *Ubongo* while a spelling bee was conducted by guest teachers and Rotaractors.

Contact: Nelly Wanjiru nellywanjiru840@gmail.com



Rotary Club of Curitiba Oeste, Brazil has implemented Reading Line project with 1st – 5th year ‘low performing’ in reading students in over 22 schools. The project develops the habit of comprehension of texts.

Contact: Claudia claudiamnatividade@gmail.com

Rotary Club of St Catherine’s Lakeshore, Ontario, Canada has developed a model where student reading is tracked and volunteers attend and listen individually for at least 15 minutes. The 440 students take a book home to read to their family and the process repeats. Contact: Linda Landry service@lindarjohn.com

Rotaract Club of Tulancingo Metro, Mexico began a literacy program for “language rescue” to promote the native language, its recognition and value as a cultural legacy.

Contact: President: rotaractmetropolitanotulancingo@hotmail.com

Rotaract Club of Semanggi, Jakarta, Indonesia gathered a large group of 4th and 5th grade students from the Petambran Elementary School and had three hours of “literary fun”. There was “Pass the Word”, “Fill the Blanks” and “Category Words”. Contact: Marsella Eka marsella_eka93@yahoo.com

Rotary Club of Winder, D. 6910, USA formed the Barrow Book Partnership. The program provides books and assists families in providing nurturing, language-enriched environments during the crucial first five years of life by storytelling. Contact: Beth McIntyre bmcintyre@prlib.org

Rotary Club of Zanesville, D. 6690, USA has a week of activities in the Zanesville and Muskingum County community to promote literacy and build partnerships with area schools and organizations to foster literacy and peace in the community. Contact: Janet Stewart jancys@columbus.rr.com

Rotary Club of Ponta Grossa Oeste, Brazil had a Poems Competition for 6th to 9th grades students to encourage reading and writing as well as stimulating poetic writing.

Contact: Alana Berti alanaberti52@gmail.com

Rotary Club of Awka Central, Anambra, Nigeria had two major projects: a ‘Back to School’ and an essay competition with the title “How I spent my last holiday”. The club members also donated reading material to several local schools. Contact: Joan Emegoakor joanolachi@yahoo.com

Rotary Club of Uyo, D. 9142, Nigeria unveiled a novel project to educate teachers, parents & children on the preparation of affordable egg meals rich in protein and beneficial for optimal brain function. The link with literacy was the use of bilingual lectures and the charts. Contact: Eka Etuk ekastica@yahoo.com

Rotary Club of Nassau Sunrise, D. 7020, Bahamas

designed activities to improve the literacy experiences of children and adults on such topics as: the effect of literacy on crime; the importance of literacy in the education system; literacy challenges at university level.

Contact: PDG Felix Stubbs felixstubbs@gmail.com

Rotary Club of Martinsburg (West Virginia, USA)

Sunrise Rotary provides a backpack filled with books to second-graders in Berkeley County to help prevent the ‘summer academic slump’ experienced by many students.

Contact: Todd Cimino-Johnson
todd.ciminojohnson@gmail.com

Right: Excited 2nd grade ‘Read Berkeley’ children with their new books for summer-time pleasure.



Reading and the “challenges” of home schooling

During the past few days in my community, some children have been returning to school after several weeks at home and ‘home-schooling’ with their parents or grandparents. For most, returning to school was quite exciting to see their friends again. On the other hand, it is a pause in the closer interaction that many adults had with children about their actual schoolwork – at a whole range of levels.

In every instance, reading would be involved. Some parents would be impressed with the standards reached, while others had different expectations. Recently Dr Sally Robinson (a Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Texas Medical Branch) said, **“Suddenly, parents have had to become extremely involved in their children’s education and many find they’re extremely grateful for the teachers who inspire and guide their children’s education. One of the most important skills is that of reading.”**

One would hope that the young parent who became so intimately involved with their child may have come to realise the centrality of the basics of reading – knowing that sounds have meaning and that meaning and learning are fun and are certainly rewarding. Those who read these LitRAG pages know that very well.

Also over the past weeks, I have noted how exceptional many and probably most public libraries have been. Despite closing their doors, libraries have been overwhelmed by those in isolation. I have read about libraries from Perth, Western Australia to Perth, Scotland to Perth, New York, USA and towns and cities in between. Librarians and often with their close family members have moved into video conferencing – telling stories to young readers with interactions of quality. The staff have had fun and so have the children.

What can Rotarians do? Firstly, I believe we can all make contact with our local library staff and say “thank you” on behalf of Rotary and the children. Genuine appreciation is rare in this world!



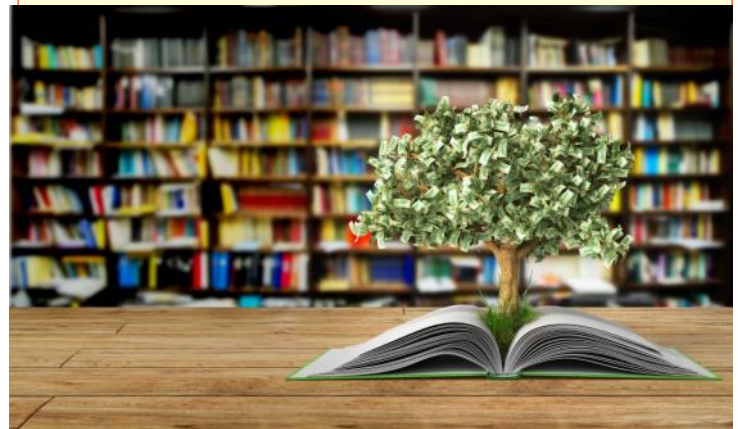
Secondly, at least, each one of us can offer support to any family near us who just might need some ideas. For instance, the internet site www.ReadingRockets.org has a great number of clear, practical ideas that could be used by families and teachers.

– by Dr John Thorne AM, Chair LitRAG

8 September 2020 International Literacy Day

We are all aware that globalisation and fast-advancing digital technology are transforming ways in which people work, live and learn, and are generating new skill demands and lifelong learning needs. Despite progress made, literacy challenges persist, distributed unevenly across countries and populations.

Embracing linguistic diversity in education and literacy development is central to addressing these literacy challenges and to achieving the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals.



Above: Knowledge grows from reading.
(Photo courtesy of the United Nations.)

How will your Club support the 2020 International Literacy Day?

International Literacy Day 2020 provides renewed impetus for Rotary Clubs to make meaningful connections between literacy and technical and vocational education and training through literacy projects and programs.

Is there a literacy project that you could initiate, repeat, support or maintain? Past Literacy Rotarian Action Group (LitRAG) newsletters offer information, ideas and suggestions about literacy projects.



Create Awareness of the severity/impact of illiteracy.
Strengthen Capacity of communities to provide education for all.

BASIC EDUCATION & LITERACY MONTH SEPTEMBER 2020

Win \$400 USD for your club

**Three awards of \$400 each will be made to clubs
with the most creative or innovative project. To enter:**

- ◆ Describe your project (500–800 words).
- ◆ Explain what your club did and the result.
- ◆ Who benefitted from your project?
- ◆ How were Rotarians involved (and how many?)
- ◆ How was the project promoted?
- ◆ Include 2-3 photos (with short captions).

Celebrate and Promote Awareness of Literacy Month

Applications must be received by 30 September 2020

Include primary contact information:

Rotarian's name & email

Club President, Club & District, city & country

Send your application to: rotary.tas@gmail.com

*The Rotarian submitting the application must be a current member of LitRAG.
Awards will be announced in the November 2020 LitRAG newsletter.*



LITERACY PROJECTS

Try developing a community literacy project that could work for permanent social change.

Here some ideas for becoming more committed to and involved in literacy education in your chosen community:

Book boxes: Build and place boxes containing books for all ages at various key locations around the township or local community. Advertise that everyone has free access to the boxes. The boxes should be waterproof and possibly made so that people can see that there are books inside. Organize for regular replenishment and change-over of books.

Financial literacy: Develop a financial education and savings program that assists individuals and families (perhaps on lower incomes) to understand the basic concepts of financial management, in the areas of earning, saving, spending and investing. The project would help participants to develop a savings habit, build assets and improve financial capability.

Perform a puppet show at a library or local community center. The puppets might perform a story from a book or an original humorous show that promotes reading or a meaningful historical event. Students could even write their own stories focused on reading and literacy.

Hold a **read-a-thon book experience**, inviting parents and students from the neighborhood to come and hear books read to them by students. Solicit new or used books from the community to give away to children who attend.



Conduct a **literacy games night** after hours at a community library.

Host a **battle of the books** event in which students from the community have a contest based on trivia from pre-selected books.

Have students **write and perform plays or skits** inspired by books that they've read. They can perform for the community or at retirement villages.

Design and create **literacy flash cards** to help younger students read. Distribute them to needy schools or shelters.

Community Partners: Approach partners in your community who will work with students on literacy projects. Partners could be libraries, local bookstores, local writers, universities, colleges or other schools. Engage the students in investigating an issue and contacting the partners for advice or support. Connecting with a community resource makes the project more meaningful and impactful.

LitRAG Office Bearers

LitRAG Executive Committee:

- Chair: John Thorne AM, PRID (Australia)
- Vice Chair: Carolyn Johnson, PDG (USA)
- Secretary: Courtney Doldron, Pres. (Canada)
- Treasurer: Harvey Baxter, Rotarian (USA)

LitRAG Directors:

- Rodolfo Bianchi, PDG (Guatemala)
- Sylvia Byers, PDG (Australia)
- Chebab Elawar, PDG (USA)
- David Fowler, Past President RIBI (England)
- Shekhar Mehta, PRID (India)
- Anand Seth, Rotarian (USA)
- Courtney Doldron, Rotarian (Canada)

LitRAG Advisors to the Board:

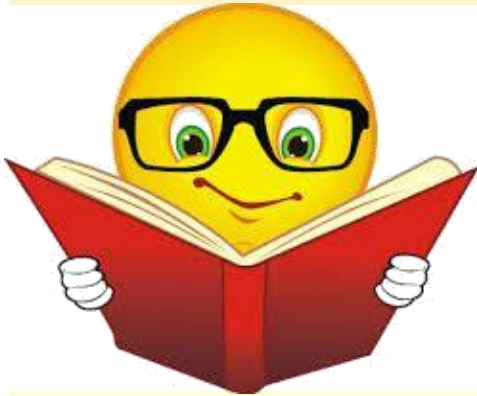
- Bill Boyd, Past RI President (New Zealand)
- Noraseth Pathmanand, PRID (Thailand)
- William Stumbaugh, Rotarian (Ecuador)

Website: www.litrag.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Reading.Rotary/>

Contact Carolyn Johnson:
info@litrag.org

The Literacy Rotarian Action Group is a recognised Rotarian Action Group and operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency of or controlled by Rotary International. Note: Rotarian Action Groups are a resource to Rotary clubs and districts in their speciality but are not an agency of RI and may not act on behalf of RI as part of all agreements.



Pause ...

Prompt.

Praise!



Used well, the simple technique of **Pause, Prompt, Praise** will support your child in practising his/her reading and in developing reading confidence and fluency. Try using this technique every time your child reads aloud to you at home and he/she becomes stuck trying to read a tricky word or read one that is new to them.

This technique (sometimes called the 3Ps) will give your child the chance to have another go, self-correct or, if needed, be told what the word is.

Remember from the outset when using Pause, Prompt, Praise:

- ◆ The main aim of reading is to make sense (understand) what is being read and to enjoy the experience. Keep this in mind when prompting or praising.
- ◆ Try to be relaxed, interested and supportive when listening to your child read. This will encourage your child if he/she makes mistakes or cannot work out a word. Being frustrated at your child does not help.
- ◆ Sit comfortably and in a position where you can easily read the material too.

This technique works best when your child is reading material that suits his/her age and reading level. That is, when your child can easily read most of the words in the material and only stumbles occasionally.

Is the book too hard at the moment?

To be considered a fluent reader, a child needs to have a success rate of 96 per cent or more. You can use the 'five finger' test to work this out. Ask your child to read about 100 words in the book and every time he/she makes an error without correction curl up one finger. If you curl up five fingers within those 100 words then the book is probably too hard at present.

How to do the 3Ps well:

Before reading starts:

- ◆ Are you both sitting comfortably?
- ◆ Is the TV and any distracting noise (other than gentle music) turned off?
- ◆ Together, talk about the book cover and what the title and any illustrations suggest the book might be about. Try to make connections with other books you've read together or TV shows, movies and the world. This will help provide a context and then be more meaningful.



Pause ...

Prompt.

Praise!



Pause

If your child stops at a word, try not to jump in straight away. Wait for five seconds and give your child time to work out the word.

Pausing allows your child to try to self-correct or work out the word for him/herself.

Prompt

If the mistake is minor, move on. You don't have to correct everything if the sentence still makes sense.

If your child cannot work out the word independently, you can support him/her by prompting with some quick, low-key suggestions, such as:

- ◆ *Try reading on for a sentence, miss out the tricky word and see if that helps you work out that word.*
- ◆ *What sound does the word begin with? Use that clue and think about what might make sense here.*
- ◆ *Break the word into chunks and read those.*
- ◆ *Look at the pictures and see if they give you a clue as to what the word might be.*
- ◆ *Go back to the beginning of the sentence, re-read it and have another go at working it out.*

If prompts like these don't work, this is where you simply tell your child the correct word. You can be positive by saying things like:

- ◆ *Would you like me to help you?*
- ◆ *May I tell you the word?*

When your child does read the word he/she has stumbled over, it's a good idea to ask that he/she goes back to the beginning of the sentence and re-read it to get the meaning before reading on.

You might even briefly explain the meaning of the word, but then quickly prompt your child to continue reading.

Avoid spending too much time prompting as your child will find it difficult to capture the overall meaning of the section.

Praise

This is the part that comes easiest. Praise your child's reading efforts and successes throughout the reading process.

As well as praising, it's good to tell him/her why you are praising. For example, you might say things like:

- ◆ *Well done! I thought it was great how you went back, re-read the sentence from the beginning and worked out that tricky word.*
- ◆ *That was strong reading tonight. I know I had to help you with a few words, but you also worked others out for yourself. Well done.*

Enjoy the reading experience yourself

Try to make time to read with your children and if you can, do so daily. A mixture of reading to and with them as well as listening to them read is important. Choose a place in your home that is comfortable and away from distractions (e.g. dog, TV).

Discuss

At the end of the book, spend some time talking about the book. This will build your child's understanding (comprehension) and memory skills. Ask your child what he/she liked or disliked about the book. Tell what you both thought and felt about it too. Link what was in the book to your child's experiences or those in the family or things happening in the neighborhood or the world.

