

# Literacy - Junior Reading Night

- Welcome
  - Kathryn – Learning to read
  - General
  - How Reading Works at PEPS
    - Diane / Allison Y0 - Y1
    - Charmaine Y2
  - Finish off, what do we expect from home now and before your child starts school.
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- Reading has to be done regularly and consistently. The more we read the better we get at it.
  - Read to your child, read with your child, listen to your child read.
  - Discuss the language in the book, what the plot is, ask inferential questions that the book suggests but doesn't actually ask in black and white. Discuss the vocab in the book, children don't always know what all the vocab means in a story. Eg Eskimos: they mightn't know what an eskimo is, or an igloo. They need to understand this before they can totally understand the story.
  - For a child to get better fluency and understanding they must read easy books. A child who is so busy decoding cannot possibly be thinking about the understandings or storyline as well.
  - A book may be revisited many times. Each time a different teaching point may be being used. Because the text is familiar and the decoding has already been done in the previous lesson the new teaching point then becomes the main focus.
  - A good reader uses 3 main strategies and crosschecks these as they are reading to gain better understanding.

These cues are:

- ❖ Visual: what the word looks like. Ask: Does that look right? Are those the letters that you just sounded out/said?

- ❖ Meaning: Ask: Does that make sense? Can we use that word in this piece of writing and it still makes sense?
- ❖ Structural: Ask: Can we say that (in that way) in the English language?

Your child will use the above cues already, although they may lean on one cue more than another. A good reader uses all cues to solve unknown words and to get the full meaning out of what they are reading.

When reading with your children it would be beneficial if you could ask some of the questions above as your child reads – sometimes even when they have got it right as this will show them that they are on the right track and they will become more confident.

I will be using the same questions throughout the year.

- The reason we read is to gain understanding whether it be a story, an article or instructions. So this must be our ultimate goal. Meaning is paramount.
- If your child is having trouble with a book ask the reading cue questions when meeting a problem, but if the reading time is becoming upsetting (for the child or the parent), please read the story with the child or read it to them and discuss or do the reading at another time.
- Make reading time a fun / happy time.
- Model reading to the children. Read to them every night. Let your child see you reading books too.
- When in the car or at home chant / sing nursery rhymes / poems together. This will let your child feel the rhythm of our language. It will help your child hear examples of simple, complex and compound sentences. This will help their reading but also their story writing where children need to be able to form a sentence.
- If your child isn't into reading (and this may come later), find the reading material that will hook them in. My son

didn't like reading as he became older, but any novels or magazines or visual books that had anything to do with Motorbikes got him. We still subscribe to MX magazines, and he has read every Britton book there is.

- Testing. Your child's teacher is monitoring them every day. At shared book time, in group work when discussing a book. Teachers will also test your children at least once a term. This shows us how they are reading, what cues they are using and what their understandings are. At the age of six, each child is given a test called the Six Year Net. This tests a wide range of skills and knowledge that the child has in literacy. This is reported back to parents and to the child's teacher for their next learning steps. In the school we have a Reading Recovery programme which is half funded by the Ministry and half by our BOT. This programme is a huge investment of both time and money, but is well worth it. The programme takes the lowest children at the age of six, with a maximum of 4 children at our school on at any one time. These children see the Reading Recovery teacher every day for 20 weeks and rapid growth is seen to take these children to the average level, in the class.
- National Standards: Our philosophy here at PEPS is to give a good solid grounding at the base of the learning, so that the children have the skills to scaffold or add onto when coming to newer and more challenging tasks or skills. A firm foundation on which to build new skills, as the children go up the levels is very important to bring about the confidence in reading, the fluency and most importantly the meaning and understanding of what the reading material is about. This building of a sound skill base which the school firmly believes in does not correlate with the standards that the government has set us. We take note of what the National Standards are and use these as a goal to reach, but not to the detriment of our children's learning. The children who have a solid base are always the winners in the end as their reading and

writing is strong, sound and progresses at a high rate once the base skills are established.

- There are several comprehension types but the ones we mainly use and teach in the juniors are literal (what you see in the print), and inferential (what the story line suggests but doesn't actually say it). We need to discuss the stories and reading with our children but always remember not to over do it. Reading is an enjoyable pastime, and if we are stopping all the time to discuss the story then the storyline will be lost.
  - Discussion on reading by Allison and Diane for the Year 0 – Year 1 age group.
  - Discussion on reading by Charmaine for the Year 2 age group.

Your child will have group teaching everyday Monday through to Thursday. On the fifth day we concentrate on poems and shared book work. At this group work, skills will be taught from the specific book being taught and any incidental teachings that need to be taught that come from the children themselves at the time. Whilst I'm teaching the group down at the mat the other children in their groups are given 5 other literacy based activities to continue on with. These activities revisit and maintain skills that have been taught previously.

At the beginning of each lesson work is done as a class on shared book, poems and reading wall stories where skills are introduced or revisited. This class work enables the children to share their skills and become the teachers as well, and a skill that has not been able to be understood before may now make sense in the fact that it is delivered in a different manner.

I encourage fluency (reading like talking), comprehension (asking obvious and not so obvious questions about what they are reading), and word and letter skills that will help them now and in future reading.

Your child may receive books that they have seen or had before but this is all part of the process of making the reading

more fluent and consequently the understanding better. Your child will have several reading tests during the year, and they have to show both reading fluency and comprehension to me. We do move the children up through the levels, but at this stage and particularly with the better readers, our goal is not just to move up, but also to broaden and en-rich their understandings and knowledge. Reading mileage is important in maintaining fluency. At this stage children who have only used literal comprehension (what is written in print), are introduced to inferential. This is new and a challenging skill to learn, being quite abstract, and obviously the children need to be confident in their text reading before they can begin to learn this new skill. We must remember the purpose of reading, to find information or to gain enjoyment from a story, so if we do not understand what we read, we are not meeting this purpose. So if you think your child has dropped in levels (over and above what they sometimes lose after the six week holiday), then it is because we have started learning new and more difficult comprehension skills, and it is part of the reading process.

I firmly believe that we need to give our children a sound and solid base when teaching them reading. If your child has a sound base they will be a confident reader for ever, as they have the cues and structures to cope with when coming to unknown work. As an aside to that there are so many wonderful stories in our junior department, it would be a crying shame to not read them. As professionals of course we will teach your child at their own level, but a child with a rich and wide knowledge/strategy base will be able to tackle the world with a lot more passion and well-rounded thinking processes, than someone who has quickly sped up the levels and has a more limited and narrow experience of reading.

Writing, reading and oral language, go hand in hand. We need to continually have meaningful discussions with our children so that they can hear the language and communicate better. This making sense of language is so important when learning to write, as children need to know how to form a sentence that makes sense, and is structurally sound. Children need to hear the lilt or sound of language, so that they can add in expression and make their own reading and writing more interesting.

○ **What we would like to see when children enter the junior school and to continue maintaining while here:**

- How to hold onto a pencil correctly.
- How to write their name.
- Have listened to songs and poems to gain rhythm and vocabulary.
- Have been read too and know basic book knowledge such as cover, title, author, where to read, directionality.
- Have had discussions on what they have read about, about a day out at the zoo, shopping mall etc. So that they know how to form simple sentence instead of talking in two or three words.
- Sing and count number rhymes, count stairs.
- Make children aware of print, letters, say look at this letter, this word when reading a story. This does not mean learning specific words necessarily but it gets them into the language that words and letters exist and that they are different things. What makes them different is the clusters of letters and the spaces between.
- Practise writing sounds, letters, holding pencil correctly.
- Get your child to retell a favourite story to you. Ask what happened next? And then? This promotes the skill of sequencing that we need in our lives, but directly links into reading and writing.
- Model writing, letters, postcards etc, so they see the purpose of learning to write. Remember reading and writing go hand and hand and should be of a similar level for each child.

Above all just enjoy books. Don't ask so many questions that reading isn't fun. Praise, praise and praise your child for reading to you, for having a go at working an unknown word out and for giving their all to their own learning.

Reading is knowledge and the doorway to our world.

Charmaine McNeil

All notes will be added to the school website.