

THE STUDIO SCHOOL OF DURHAM

DISCOVER • MASTERY • ADVENTURE

Launched in 2017, The Studio School of Durham is a new, research-based, project-focused independent school for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. We believe children deserve and need a 21st century education, so we equip our students with a spirit of discovery, mastery, and adventure that will empower them to fulfill their greatest potential across their school years and beyond.

PAINFREE LITERACY

5 tips for coaching young readers

Part of developing that 21st century skillset is making literacy relevant, approachable, and, above all else, pain-free for both learners and parents. Fortunately, we've narrowed it down to 5 quick and easy tricks to make at-home literacy work less difficult and more meaningful for everyone.



1. Create a Dynamic Reading Ritual

Children need structure, but they also need variety within that structure. Set a weekly learning schedule that includes reading time. It's best if it happens at the same time each day. Within the structured reading time, you can and should offer a variety of reading practices. The most traditional approach is to read aloud while your child follows along. This allows you to model good reading fluency and exposes them to the printed word at the same time. I would challenge you to make it interesting by using different voices for different characters.

Some suggestions for variety include:

- Read aloud while child follows along
- Popcorn reading
- Choral (simultaneous) reading
- Child reads aloud to you



2. Give Praise First

Knowing what they did right is critical for a reader. It builds confidence, makes reading enjoyable, and decreases the chance of resistance later on. If you start by handling the error without praise, readers will often automatically start guessing at words and even correct words they got right initially. The focus then becomes learning to please versus learning to read.

Some suggestions for praise:

- "Wow, great job reading that word '!' That was a tricky word"
- "Good job reading that whole sentence!"

3. Use Socratic Questioning

At SSD, we consider ourselves to be guides who ask questions rather than "experts" who give answers, empowering our students to become self-directed, independent learners. One way we accomplish this is through Socratic questioning. Let's look at an example.

Text: The fox swam across the stream.

Error: The fox swam across the steam.

The coach may respond in a few different ways:

Coach: "The fox swam across the steam. Does that make sense? What do you picture for a fox swimming across the steam?"

Coach: "Let me read it exactly the way you read it and see if you can catch my error."

In response number one, the coach is directing the student to access the "movie" in his or her mind to see that the visual image doesn't make sense. How would you picture a fox swimming across the steam? But, let's say that a reader makes a mistake with an error that still makes sense, even though it changes the meaning of the story. That's a good opportunity to read it back with the child's error, allowing the child to catch it, such as in example two. You've just empowered your learner to be the "teacher" who fixes his or her own mistake as if it's yours, thereby increasing confidence.

Some words just don't play fair, such as the word "enough." If the reader tries to sound it out, meaning it's not a sight word yet, it's okay to explain to the reader that it doesn't play fair and then tell him or her what the word is.

4. Build Vocabulary

Reading is a great opportunity to learn the meaning of new words and to teach your young learner the skills and processes for doing so. This is crucial, because most vocabulary is learned from reading from the fourth grade on. Keep a list of new words as they come up in reading or even conversations in order to focus on incorporating these words into their active vocabulary. When readers come across a word they don't know, they'll usually ask an adult what it means. Even when working with very young learners, the goal is to have them find their own answers to questions as independently as possible.



Some suggestions for vocabulary tools:

- Use Socratic questioning to aid understanding
- Be a detective
- Create a vocabulary list
- Target practice

5. Make a Movie in the Mind

Remember that the whole point of reading is to gain meaning. To understand what we read, we must convert the printed word into a dynamic image in the mind or a "movie." As Einstein said, "If I can't picture it, I can't understand it," so mental imagery is a necessary component to learning. Use the words "see" and "picture" or even the word "imagine" to help bring this mental imagery to consciousness. To bring a story to life, consider acting out parts of the story or even creating a play based on the book and then perform it for the family.

Some suggestions for mind-movie magic:

- "What did those words make you picture?"
- "Why do you picture the character chose to do that?"
- "What do you see happening next?"



DO THE BEST YOU CAN

At the end of the day, reading with your child at home is one of the most important parts of their growth and development. We know it can be a challenge, and we hope that these 5 easy tips and tricks will help make it a more enjoyable experience for the whole family. If you found these tips to be helpful and want to learn more, fill in your contact information here (this needs to be a hyperlink) to receive our newsletter. It will arrive in your inbox 1-2 times per month and will contain information about events, excerpts from recent blog posts, tips, and more.

As always, we promise not to fill your inbox with spam or sell your information. May the force be with you as you continue your journey with your young readers!



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8:00am - 3:00pm, After school 3:00pm - 5:30pm



Annual Tuition \$9750

Sibling discounts and scholarships available
January 3rd, 2020 application deadline for first
round of admissions for 2020-2021 school year