YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND BEST TEACHER IS YOU!
Fun Reading Activities to Do at Home

The following activities take about 15 minutes. All are virtually free. These fun activities help you bond with your child while improving academic skills. These are great things to work on over Track Out that are fun and not very time consuming. Of course, they are optional. But it is important for your child to be doing something academic over Track Out.

The activities are listed in alphabetical order, with the skills they teach noted in parentheses.

Be sure to provide ample praise and encouragement as you work with your child. Learning to read takes patience and lots of practice. Have fun!

Fun Reading Activities to Do at Home

1. Book Chats (Comprehension)
Remember, your child can come to the school's library and check out books while they are Tracked Out. Also, there is a section of leveled books that only parents can check out. Also, the public library is a good resource.

This is simply an informal discussion with questions such as "What did you like about this book or story?" "Who was your favorite character?" "Would you like to trade places with the main character?" "Why or why not?"

For non-readers or lower level readers, you can read an interesting short story to your child, and then discuss it together. Popular magazines such as *People* and *Sports Illustrated*, and newspapers are good sources for high interest topical material.

2. Categories (Word Meaning)
Decide on some categories that appeal to your child's age group, or let your child decide the category. For example; "*Restaurants*," "*Television Shows*," "*Pets*," "*Toys*," etc. Have your child try to write down 5-10 words that would fit into that category. Have them spell the words as best as they can, but don't worry if they don't "bookspell" the words. We'll be working on that a lot this year.

3. Concentration (Word Meaning)

Use 20 index cards. On sets of two, write a vocabulary word on one card and its definition of the second. Use words your child found in books that they have been reading or you can choose words off of the word list (especially words they are struggling with. Remember, the word lists are on my class website. You can also print off 2 sets of flash cards and divide the word lists into several games!)

Mix up the cards and lay them face down on a table or the floor in a 4 x 5 array. Take turns turning over two cards. If the word and its definition are a match, keep the cards. If they do not match, turn them back over in the same spot. Continue until all the cards have been matched. Whoever has the most cards is the winner.*Encourage your child to read the words, even when you are choosing the cards.

4. Flash Cards (Word List Words)

Make flash cards using your child's word list. Have your child practice reading the flash cards to you in various ways. For example, (1) draw a card and read it. Keep the card if it is read correctly. (2) Lay all the cards face down on the table, and you point to a card to pick up and read. (3) Use a timer and see how quickly your child can read you the flash card words with no errors.

5. Lists (Alphabetical Order, Word Meaning)

Pick a place from which to collect words. For example, "I went to the zoo and saw…" "I went to the beach and saw…" "I went to the grocery store and bought…", etc. Words should be from your child's speaking vocabulary, not from a pre-set list of words.

Start the activity by saying, "I went to the grocery store and bought **A**pples." Your child then says, "I went to the grocery store and bought **A**pples and **B**ananas." Continue taking turns and adding items: "I went to the grocery store and bought **A**pples, **B**ananas, and **C**arrots." And so on in alphabetical order.

Write the words on a list as they are generated. After a list of about 10 words has been generated, pause and ask your child to read back the list. Continue as time permits.

6. Magazine Chats (Comprehend Sentences, Comprehend Passages)

Use magazines that have high interest articles, depending upon your child's age. The advertisements are also good sources of high interest reading materials. Even non-readers can identify logos for popular fast food restaurants and items they have seen on television.

Talk about the pictures and how they relate to the article. Help your child read the picture captions. Discuss how to figure out unfamiliar words by using the beginning sound and placing it in context with the article. For example, your child can decipher the word "hamburger" if he or she realizes that it is a word in a MacDonald's advertisement. Circle or underline the key words, and have your child copy them into their Personal Dictionary.

7. Menu Madness (Word Meaning, Context Clues)

Use menus from popular family restaurants like MacDonald's, Applebee's, I-Hop, Cracker Barrel, etc. Most will be glad to give you several copies.

Help your child sound out unfamiliar words using context clues. For example, "pie," "ice cream," and "chocolate" would be logical words in the desert section. If your child knows the beginning sound, and perhaps a few consonants, he or she should be

able to decipher most familiar words in context. For example, S-P _ G _ _ T-T_ in the entrée section is "spaghetti."

8. Newspaper Captions (Comprehend Sentences, Comprehend Passages, Main Idea)

Use the local newspaper. Find pictures that appeal to your child's age or interest level. Have your child describe what the picture tells about. Then help your child read the caption, referring to clues based on the content of the picture. Circle key words to help understand what the story might be about.

9. Newspaper Headlines (Comprehend Sentences, Comprehend Passages, Main Idea)

Use short high-interest articles from the local newspaper. (Be sure you quickly read the title and article in case it is something that is not appropriate for your child). Have your child read the headline to you. Help with unfamiliar words as needed. Have your child predict (guess) what the article will be about based on the headline. Then you read the entire article aloud. Discuss with your child whether after hearing the article read that their guess was correct. Remember, it's ok to be wrong!!

10. Song Lyrics/ Nursery Rhymes (Word Meaning)

Write, type, or find the lyrics on the internet to familiar children's songs or nursery rhymes such as "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or "Hickory Dickory Dock." You can also use current popular songs that are appropriate for young children. Read the lyrics together, or sing the song together. Another version is to hum the tune while your child reads the lyrics back to you.

11. Stump the Teacher (Comprehend Sentences, Comprehend Passages)

Reverse roles and let your child ask you questions. Read a passage together, or silently, and let your child ask you questions about the passage. "What was the main idea?" "Who was the main character?" Etc. *Be sure to give some intentional incorrect answers, and let your child correct you.* Act amazed that your child has stumped the teacher. You might even keep score and see how many times your child can stump the teacher and provide the correct response.

12. Wheel of Fortune (Word Meaning)

"Hangman" is another version of this activity, though we don't play that game anymore. You will need a paper and pencil, or use a slate and chalk. Use vocabulary words that your child will know or is learning. The words on the word list would be great for this game.

Start by drawing a line for each letter in the word. Determine how many guesses your child has to figure out the word. A good starting place is 15 guesses. A vowel counts for two guesses. Give your child a hint as to the category for the word (horse). For example, "The category is animals. The word is _ _ _ _ _. "

Your child begins by guessing a letter; "Is there an h?" If the guess is correct, you write it in the correct space. h _ _ _ _ and tally a point. If your child wants to buy a vowel it will cost two points. So if your child guesses "i," and there is no "i," the tally is now up to three points. Keep guessing letters until your child runs out of guesses, or has figured out the word. The goal is to identify the word in as few turns as possible.

It is also fun to reverse roles and let your child have you guess the words.