

Appropriate Reading Discussions for Children

Children can greatly benefit from reading and discussing books and other materials at home.

Questions to Ask...

Before Reading

Fiction:

- Read the title. What do you think the book might be about? What might happen in the book?
- What kind of characters do you expect to be in the story?
- Where and when do you think the story takes place?
- Do you think there will be conflict or any sort of problem in the story?
- Do you think you will be able to relate the story to your life or our family?

Nonfiction:

- Read the title. What do you think we'll be reading about?
- What do you already know about this topic? What do you want to know?
- Look inside the book at the headings and subheadings. What are we going to read about?
- Look at the words in bold or italic print. What are they? Do you know what they mean?
- Look at some of the pictures and captions. What are they illustrating?

While Reading

Fiction:

- What can you tell me about the story and characters so far?
- What do you think will happen next and how do you think this story will end?
- What would you have done if you were one of the characters in the story? Why do you think they have acted the way they have?
- What did you see in your head during that last scene? What are you thinking about as you read?
- What is that word? What do you think it means? How did you figure out the meaning?

Nonfiction:

- What do you think is the main idea of the last section you read? What are some details?
- What do you think we'll read about in the next section?
- What are you thinking about as you read? Can you picture any of the concepts in your head?
- What is that word? What do you think it means? How did you figure out the meaning?
- Was there anything confusing in the last section? Should we go back and re-read?

After Reading

Fiction:

- Were your predictions right?
- Do you think the title was appropriate or would you have named it something different?
- What was the story's problem and how was it solved? Are there other ways it could have been solved?

- Did you like the ending of the book? How could the ending be changed?
- Who do you think was the main character? If you were them, how would you feel throughout the story?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What was the point of the story?
- What was the main idea? Tell me 3 to 5 important details from the story.
- Did you like the story? Why or why not? Who was your favorite character and why?
- Retell the story in your own words, and draw a picture illustrating the story.
- Make up 5 “wh-” questions about the story — “Who? What? When? Where? Why?”
- Write a short paragraph to summarize the story.
- Was any part of the story confusing to you?
- Did this remind you of any other story you’ve read? Which one and why?
- What did you learn from the story that you didn’t know before?

Nonfiction:

- Were your predictions right?
- What did you learn from the story that you didn’t know before?
- What do you still want to know that wasn’t answered in the text?
- How did the text make you feel?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- What was the main idea? Tell me 3 to 5 important details you learned.
- Did you like the text? Why or why not? What was your favorite part?
- Make up 5 “wh-” questions about the text — “Who? What? When? Where? Why?”
- Write a short paragraph to summarize the text.
- Was any part of the text confusing to you?

Remember, reading time is meant to be fun as well as educational. Don't push your child too hard. Allow him or her to learn and develop at his/her own pace.