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ABSTRACT

This handbook was developed in response to the "America Reads Challenge," a national effort to ensure that all children can read independently and well by the end of third grade. It is designed to provide volunteer tutors with specific, hands-on information about the tutoring process. It explains to tutors how to motivate students to get them excited about learning to read, how to structure and implement tutoring sessions, and how to keep records and evaluate both the students and the tutors themselves. The handbook is divided into the following three broad sections (with subsections): (1) Warming Up (Tutors Are Coaches, Tutors Build Teamwork, Tutors Motivate Success, and Tutors Guide Strategies); (2) The Game Plan (Planning the Tutoring Session and The Six Elements of the Tutoring Session); and (3) Team Spirit (Measuring Your Child's Success, Evaluating Your Tutoring, and Activities for Tutors). Contains an 8-item bibliography and a 6-item list of additional resources available from the International Reading Association. (NKA)

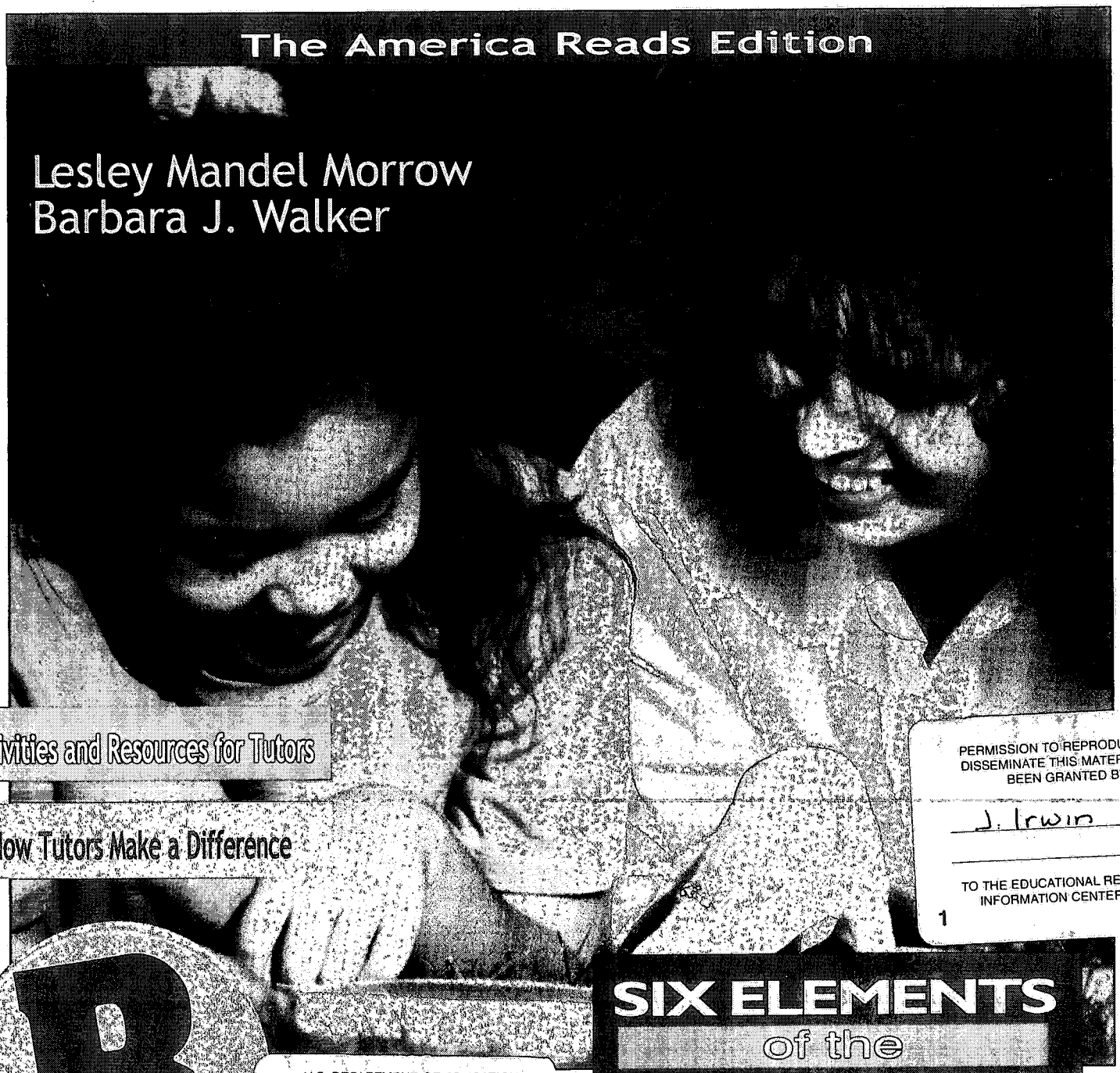
THE

READING TEAM

A Handbook for Volunteer Tutors K-3

The America Reads Edition

Lesley Mandel Morrow
Barbara J. Walker



Activities and Resources for Tutors

How Tutors Make a Difference

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R READING

SIX ELEMENTS of the TUTORING SESSION

The READING TEAM

A Handbook for Volunteer Tutors K-3

Lesley Mandel Morrow and Barbara J. Walker

INTERNATIONAL Reading Association

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FOREWORD

For those who take on the tutoring challenge,

What better way to serve another human being than to support the reading development of a young child! The black squiggly marks surrounded by white space on a page of print must surely be a source of mystery for children who struggle with reading. How strange the process must seem to children who cannot put together all of the pieces of the human puzzle we call reading. Imagine the frustration. Imagine the sense of loss. For a child who struggles with reading, it soon becomes nonsense, an activity to be avoided at all costs in and out of school. Failure begets failure. And the cycle of failure continues throughout life in all facets of human activity.

No wonder U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley elevated the importance of reading the September 1993 issue of the *U.S. Department of Education News Bulletin* by noting, "America will go from great to second rate if our children cannot read well enough. The jobs of tomorrow demand complex skills and high-level performance. The basics aren't good enough anymore." But learning to read well enough goes beyond an economic imperative. Learning to read well is about more than jobs. Reading is a liberating force in our lives. It sets us free: to wonder, to challenge, to respond, to think and feel, to make better decisions, to live life more fully.

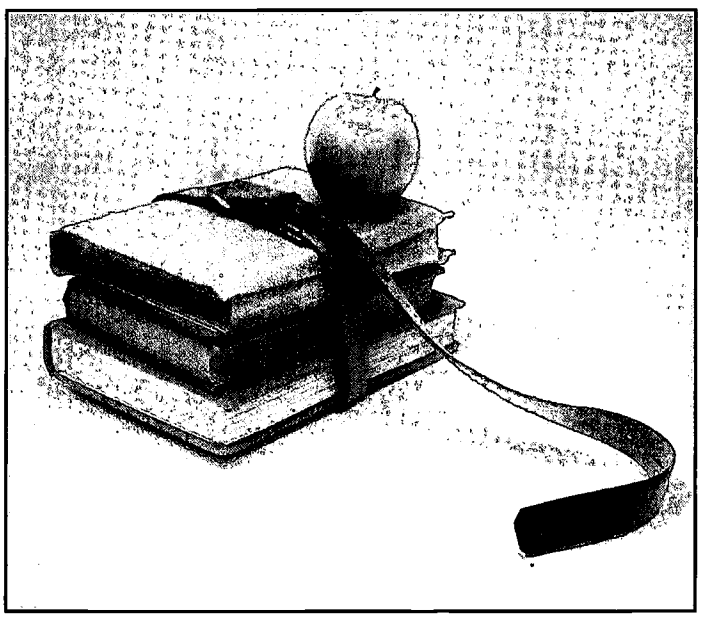
As a volunteer tutor, you will face many challenges. Personal commitment and a genuine willingness to help will do much to help a child unlock the mysteries of reading. But so will a strategy or two. You will work to build not only reading competence when you are tutoring a child, but also confidence. The confidence factor cannot be overlooked when you're tutoring a struggling reader. A child needs to have hope. A child needs to experience success. Confidence and competence go hand-in-hand in learning to read well enough.

In this timely resource book, you will be exposed to some practical insights and hands-on suggestions for building confident and competent readers. *The Reading Team* provides you with a solid footing to get started as a tutor. But it will not and should not be the only resource that you consult as you journey deeper and deeper into the tutoring experience. You will find that there is no single way to teach a child to read, no magic formulas, no prescriptions. Perhaps you will find yourself struggling with tutoring as much as the child you are working with is struggling with reading. Let these struggles be a basis for inquiry: study other resources, enlist the help of teachers, and work with parents and caregivers. Tutors, teachers, parents, and caregivers—working in concert with one another—can turn failure into success. As tutors, you will need to rely on know-how, but also know-why. *The Reading Team* provides you with both. It will get you off to a good start as you work with a child who is trying to put all of the pieces of reading puzzle together. ■

Richard T. Vacca
President 1996–1997
International Reading Association

AUTHORS' NOTE

The Reading Team: A Handbook for Volunteer Tutors K-3 was developed in response to the America Reads Challenge, a national, bipartisan effort launched by U.S. President Bill Clinton to ensure that all children can read independently and well by the end of third grade. Families, schools, and community volunteers are the foundation of this effort. Children who do not read well are hampered at the very start of their education, and this may affect their personal and professional success for the rest of their lives. A volunteer tutor can provide the encouragement and personal support needed to help children take part in successful reading experiences at an early age.



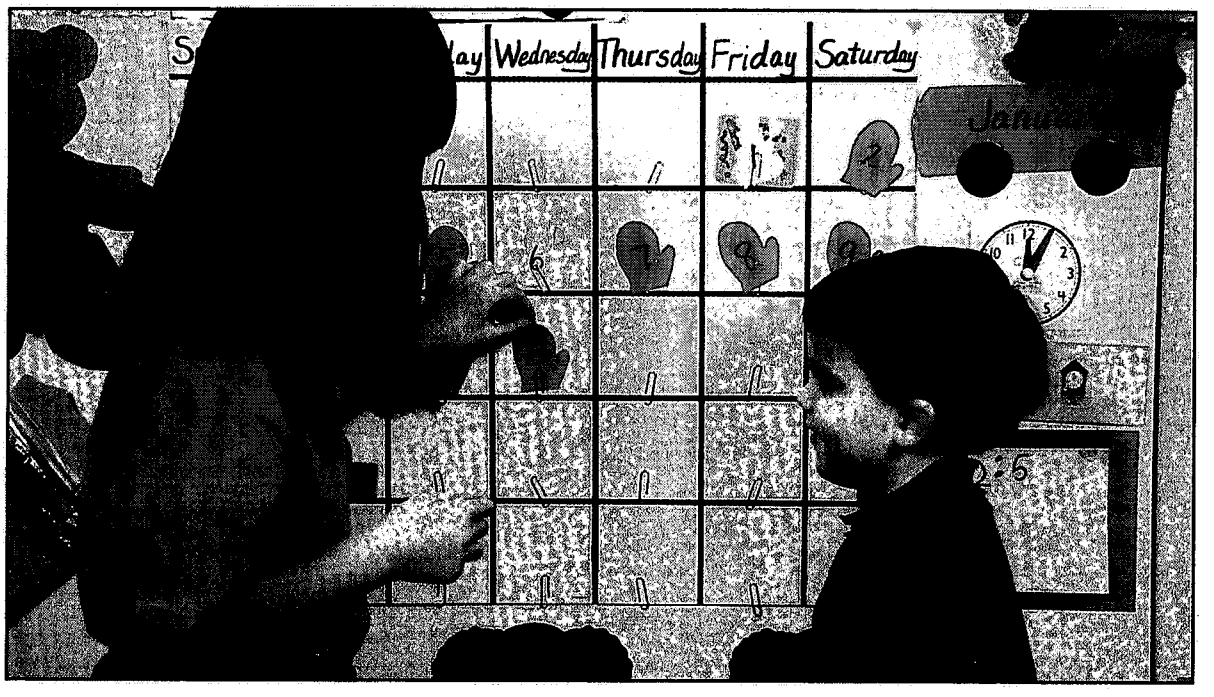
Having been increasingly concerned with the education of at-risk students, we set about constructing a tutoring program designed to increase student engagement in reading that would supplement classroom reading instruction. This handbook was developed after a decision was made by the International Reading Association Executive Board and Board of Directors calling for the Association to assume a leadership role in the America Reads endeavor.

Many students do not read in school or at home because they lack the support they need when difficulty arises. Tutors can provide the personal support that will keep students engaged in literacy tasks and working toward independence in reading. We welcome the help of volunteers in this ambitious and important effort. A word of caution is necessary, however. The Association recognizes that to be effective tutors volunteers need training and resources such as this handbook. Teaching reading is a complex process that must be taught by individuals who have had formal training, such as classroom teachers and reading specialists. However, teachers, specialists, and children all can benefit from the type of help a one-on-one support person can provide. The purpose of this handbook is to provide useful and accurate information for those who have made the important commitment to tutor children in reading and writing.

This tutoring manual includes three sections that emphasize the important role of volunteer tutors in children's literacy development, outline a plan for volunteers to begin tutoring young children, and provide resources for tutors to use. The first section, entitled "Warming Up," includes basic information about the role of the tutor as a mentor and coach who provides support for reading. The second section, entitled "The Game Plan," includes descriptions and procedures for planning and implementing tutoring sessions. The third section, "Team Spirit," contains information about record keeping, evaluating your tutoring, activities for tutors, and additional resources and examples.

We envision the tutor as a mentor who makes a personal commitment to a student's success and offers support and encouragement for reading and writing. No matter what the tutor's age or experience, volunteers have something valuable to offer students. The personal support of one-on-one interaction and encouragement will create a sparkle in the students' eyes as they experience success. We hope tutors also will have a sparkle in their eyes as they experience the excitement of sharing the gift of literacy with America's children. ■

TUTORS ARE COACHES



Children learn to read and appreciate reading by sharing books with their parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and other caregivers. Tutoring can provide this same shared experience. Often, the close one-on-one experience of tutoring is not available in public school classrooms where there are many students with diverse needs. A volunteer tutor can provide this relationship and can support other forms of literacy learning taking place in the classroom. You can make a very positive contribution by listening, sharing, and modeling.

Actively listen

During the tutoring session, there will be many opportunities to talk about reading. As children talk about a story, you listen closely to their views and accept their perspective. Even though students discuss stories in school, often their response is general and is combined with the comments of twenty other students responding with similar ideas. Students often lack the chance to develop their thinking in a personal and supportive environment. As a tutor, you will have the time to respond personally to a child's ideas. In this way, discussing what is read becomes more interesting and valuable.

Become a mentor

As you tutor, you will assume the role of a mentor or coach. Sometimes you will want to ask children to further explain their thoughts and ideas. As they explain their thinking, you can share your own views. Begin by saying, "Well, I think the author was probably trying to say. . .." In this way, you can help extend the child's thinking. By considering several views about what is read, children are challenged to think more deeply about their ideas. This mentoring role is a critical aspect of your tutoring.

Share positive reading experiences

There are many types of readers, and the best ones are those who read for pleasure and for information on a voluntary basis. It doesn't really matter what you choose to read, the important thing is that you do read. One way to support children is to share your positive reading experiences. You can share books you've read, clippings from magazines and newspapers, recipes, cards, letters, directions, and other materials. You might tell about a favorite book or share personal or work-related reading material. You can share all types of reading with a child. Discussing personal likes and dislikes shows the child that reading is a positive experience in your life. This sharing of personal literacy will motivate children to share their literacy and engage in new literacy experiences.

Share your wealth of experiences

As children read stories and information from books, they often become confused because they do not readily connect their experiences to what they are reading. You can easily provide personal examples related to the many topics that are described in books. This knowledge can be shared when discussing stories, the newspaper, unfamiliar words, or story events. From sports to fairy tales, you have had more experiences that you can use to explain information. This provides a good model for children to use their own experiences to increase understanding of what they read.

Provide a model

As you read with your child, you will provide a powerful model of a literate individual. Like young athletes, young readers need models of what successful readers do. There will be many opportunities to model your own literacy. You can begin today, watching yourself read and thinking about how you are reading. When you discuss stories, use "I" statements demonstrating how you actually thought about the story. You can say, "I was just thinking that the cat might be the reason Tommy is stuck" to indicate how you are thinking about the story. This is called thinking aloud and is a powerful way to provide a model for young readers. Thinking aloud helps you share your literacy.

Every tutoring session should include reading aloud as you begin shared reading. At this time, you will provide a model of fluent reading. Remember to read smoothly with expression and in meaningful phrases because you are also modeling oral reading. In the session we have planned, you and your child will write together, which will provide an excellent model for writing. As you write, you will want to think aloud about your ideas. It is OK to think aloud; this shows your thinking process to young writers.

Provide immediate support

In large groups, many children make mistakes and continue to read because they don't have the support needed to figure out what went wrong. Because of the one-on-one situation tutoring provides, you can give immediate support as the child is reading. You can respond by pausing to give the child time to think. Waiting for five seconds before prompting is essential to supporting literacy. This is called wait time, and gives the child the opportunity to figure out the mistake independently. Then, you can prompt the child and help him or her. At these times, you can encourage the child to ignore the mistake and read on to see if he or she can figure out the meaning, or you can encourage the child to reread the sentence and think about what might make sense. Children will usually try several ways to figure out a word or the meaning. You can provide valuable support by prompting children to try different ways to figure out unfamiliar words or challenging concepts. You should focus on the overall meaning, asking "What would make sense?" while supporting the child's attempts. Finally, when the child does figure out what went wrong, you can praise the child's efforts. Giving personal support and providing immediate feedback are key roles that you will play as the child reads.

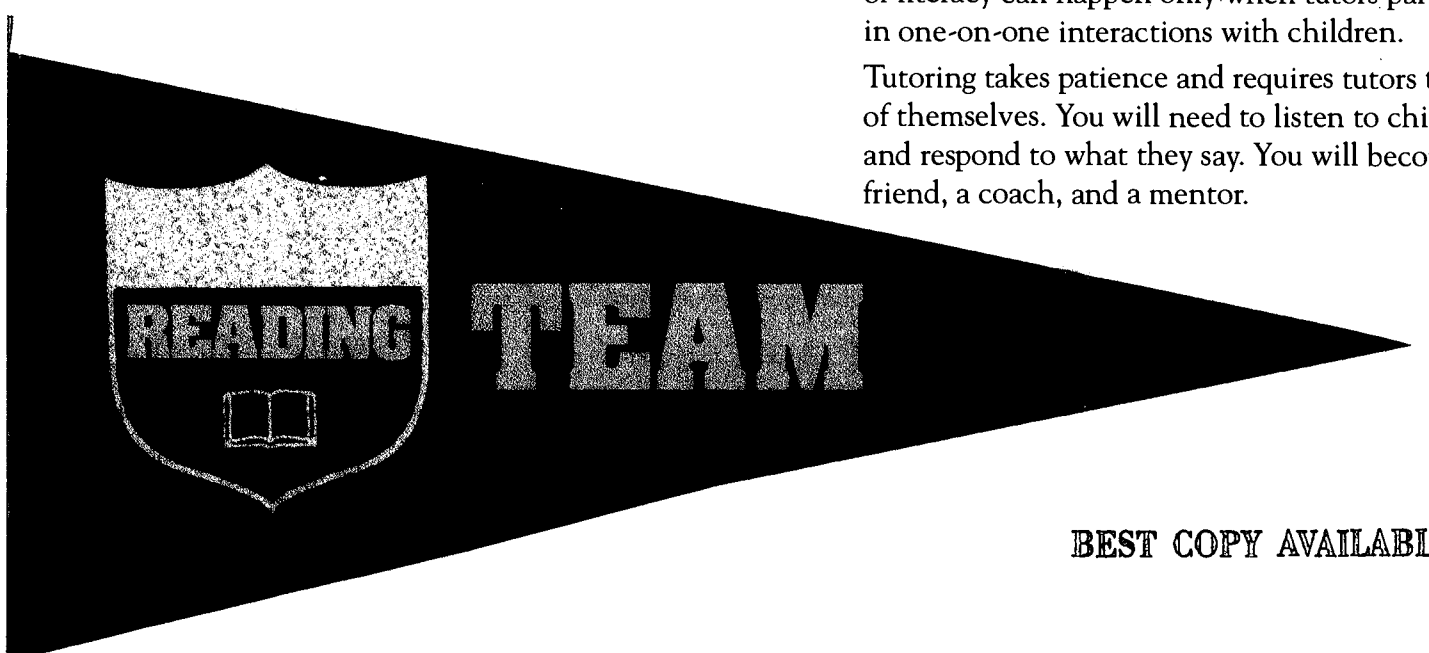
Remind students that it's OK to make mistakes

As adults, we know that much learning comes from making mistakes. Indeed, many inventions are a result of an experiment gone wrong. However, sometimes young children get discouraged when they make mistakes. You can demonstrate a light-hearted attitude toward making mistakes and reassure your child that it is OK not to be right all the time. A good reader simply corrects mistakes that change the meaning. You can talk aloud about what you say to yourself when what you are reading doesn't make sense. You might demonstrate by saying, "Oops, that didn't make sense! Now what was I reading about? Sometimes, I talk to myself about how my reading is going." Using these types of statements helps children understand that reading is not a perfect process but rather a process of predicting and checking what they are reading.

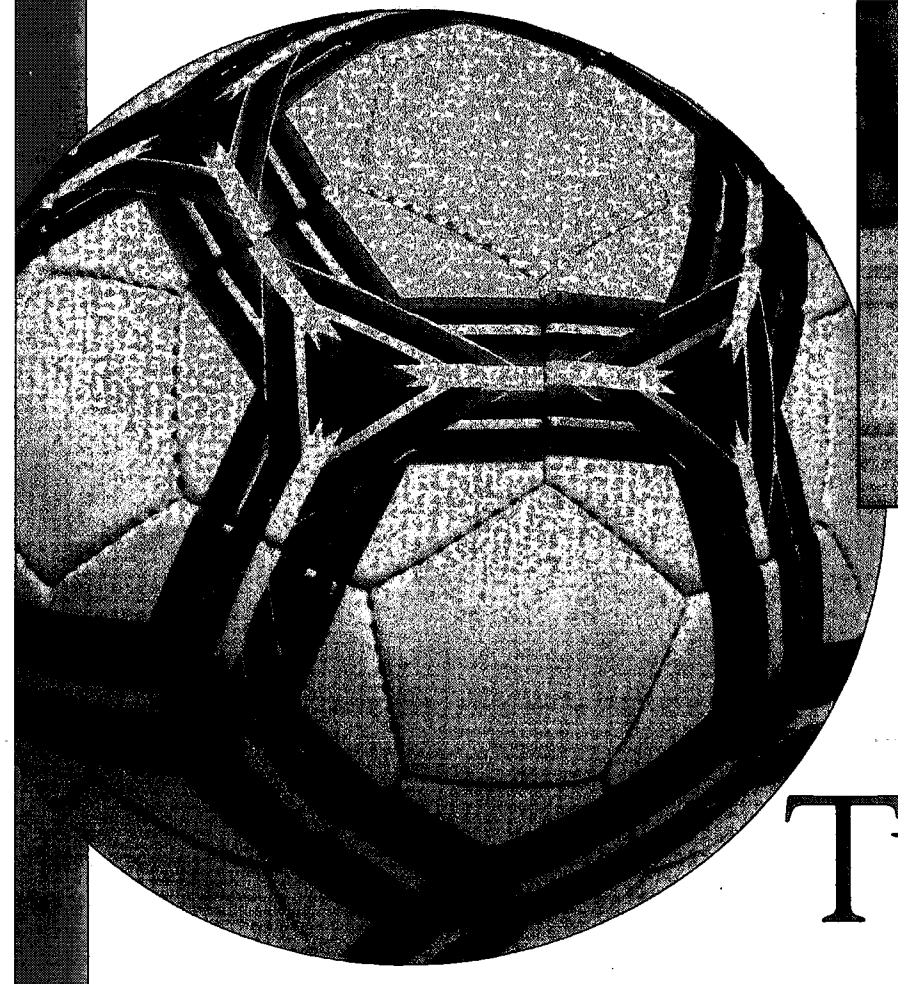
Share your enthusiasm

In the tutoring session we have planned, there are many opportunities where you can share a joy for reading that will automatically be transmitted to the child. As you share your enthusiasm for reading, you mention the power of reading and writing in your life. This close sharing of the personal nature of literacy can happen only when tutors participate in one-on-one interactions with children.

Tutoring takes patience and requires tutors to give of themselves. You will need to listen to children and respond to what they say. You will become a friend, a coach, and a mentor.



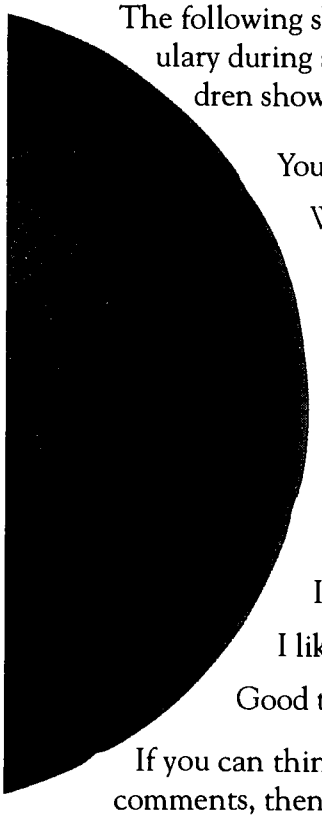
In the tutoring program, you will work with a child to help him or her build a positive attitude toward reading. In the plan we have developed, you will have many opportunities to respond positively to your child's reading. This will be essential to building a personal relationship. Another way to promote positive learning experiences is to find material that will be interesting to the child you are tutoring. It is a good idea to spend time learning more about what the child likes and what is important to him or her, so that reading will be more meaningful and interesting. The following suggestions will help build a positive, supportive relationship between you and the child you tutor.



TUTORS BUILD TEAMWORK

Build a warm relationship

One of the most important rewards of tutoring is the relationship you develop with the child that you tutor. Many of the children who need to be tutored have not been successful as readers. You need to become their coach, their friend, and their mentor. They need to feel they can trust you. When working with your child, it is important to offer a great deal of encouragement. There are several helpful phrases that will be useful while you tutor. The following should become a part of your vocabulary during a tutoring session whenever children show improvement:



You have such good ideas.

Wonderful response!

You really got a lot done today.

How can I help you?

You really understand it now.

Good answer!

You should be so proud of yourself.

I'm proud of you.

I really enjoy working with you.

I liked the way you corrected that.

Good thinking!

If you can think of other appropriate positive comments, then add them to this list.

Have high expectations for your student's accomplishments; however, don't push your child too hard. Be honest about his or her accomplishments and comment positively when appropriate. Honesty and sincerity will help you build a good relationship. If you give praise for situations where it is inappropriate, it will not be meaningful when it is. Helpful comments for supporting children when they make mistakes include the following:

That wasn't quite right, but you can try again.

That was a good try, but it isn't exactly correct.

You're on the right track, keep trying.

It is not only what you say, but how you say it. Your tone of voice and the expression on your face, for example, can tell a student if you are sincere or not.

One of your goals is to have the child you are tutoring feel that he or she is successful. The smallest improvement will generate a sense of success, and your recognition of that success is important. Most work that a child produces has some good in it even though it may not be all correct. Find the good and provide praise related to the specific aspect that was successful. When you do offer constructive criticism, do it in a supportive manner. If children feel successful, they will want to continue.

If you can build a strong bond between you and the child you tutor, he or she will look forward to working with you and will want to succeed. Spend time thinking about the caring part of the tutoring experience.

Learn about the child you are tutoring

To help the child or children you are tutoring you should learn about who they are. Show an interest in their family, where they live, if they have siblings, and what other people are important in their lives. You should ask about their friends, what they like to do after school, and about any hobbies they might have. You can talk about what activities they like, what television shows and movies they like to watch, and things they do together as a family. Remember, using children's interest increases their positive attitudes toward reading.

If you want to learn about the child you are tutoring and build a strong rapport, you must also share your life. The child you are working with will want to know about your family, your friends, the activities you like, your hobbies, and how you feel about reading and writing. With children who are reluctant to share information about themselves a simple game will help. Each of you can bring something to one of your sessions that means a lot to you. Then each can take a turn telling about what the item is and why it is important. For the adult it is often a photograph; for the child it could be a toy, a special object, or other treasure. This will open up the door to conversation and finding out

about each other. If there aren't tangible things available, you can ask the child about a place or an object he or she has at home that is special.

Find out about the child's school work

In addition to learning about the child at home, you want to know about the child at school. You want to find out from the teacher about the child's work in school. First of all you should determine what he or she is learning about reading and writing at the time you begin tutoring. It will be important to know if the child has any disabilities that would affect your interactions and reading or writing performance. Also, it is helpful to know about the things the child does well. If you are working in a school setting, you need to be aware of the materials the child is using for reading. It is also important to find out what kinds of activities the teacher views as important. We will provide a guide for the tutoring session in this handbook; however, working with the classroom teacher is extremely important. If you are not in a school-based setting, materials that would be used in classrooms can be used.

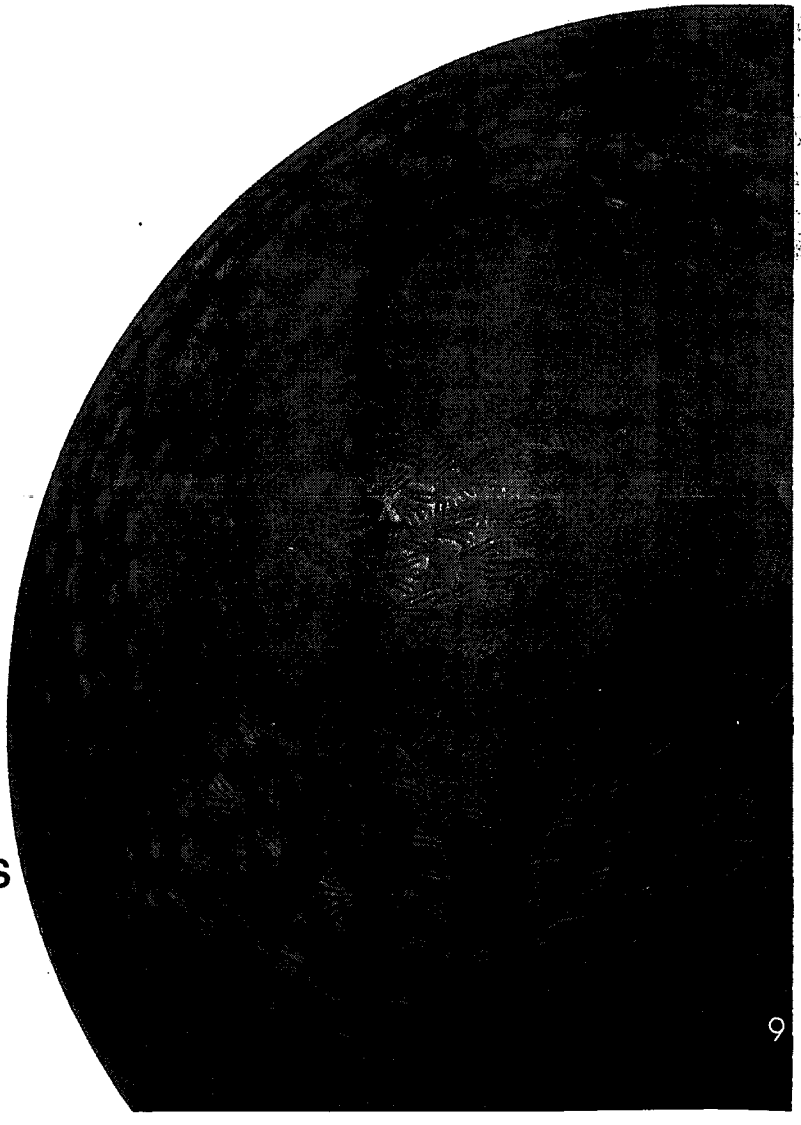
It is often said that when we teach we are the ones that learn the most. Your tutoring experience will be a very gratifying one because you will learn a great deal about relating to children and working with families, schools, teachers, and community members. Take time to learn about the child you are tutoring and his or her life in and out of school.

We have included a set of questions on page 10 that can be used to help you gather and record information about the child you are tutoring. Most of this information can be gathered during conversations with the child and the teacher. These questions can guide your thinking and do not need to be asked all in one setting.

Communicate with parents

We often forget to keep parents informed when good things happen. Parents are very interested in the success of their children. With permission from the teacher, you might want to communicate with your child's parents through a short note discussing the work you have been doing together and the progress the child is making. The note can be informal and very short. The parents will be delighted to hear that their child was able to read a book and that you are sending that book home. Ask the child to read it to family members.

With the permission of supervisory personnel, invite parents to the tutoring session. This will let them know how you are working with their child. Include the parents in your reading and writing activities. Let the child share the things you have been doing together and read with the parents. Be sure to leave some time to talk with the parents and to discuss questions they might have.



It is often said that
when we teach we are the ones
that learn the most.

Information about the child you tutor

Ask the child the following (record responses in a notebook, journal, or separate sheet of paper):

1. Do you have any brothers or sisters? What are they like? Are they older than you or younger than you?
2. Tell me about where you live (apartment, house, etc.).
3. How many people live at your house?
4. Does anyone help you with reading and writing? Who?
5. What do you like to do most when you're not in school?
6. Tell me about your friends.
7. What do you like about school?
8. What don't you like about school?
9. What are some of your favorite things? To do with friends? To do alone?
10. Do you like to read? Why?
11. Do you like to write? Why?
12. What is the very best story you ever read?

Ask the child's teacher:

1. How is the child doing with school work?
2. What type of help does the child need?
3. Is there any physical, social, emotional, or intellectual information I should know about the child?
4. What materials and strategies are you working on in reading and writing?
5. How can I help you with the work you are doing in reading and writing?

Tutors Motivate Success

The purpose of volunteer tutoring is to develop good readers who are motivated to read on their own. We do this by reading books to children and discussing stories, and acting as a supportive mentor and coach to young children. Within this relationship we support students as they read alongside us. We know that students learn when they talk with others about their reading. As a mentor, you can easily talk with children about what they are reading. As they share what they have read with you, they develop their understanding and expand their thinking. By discussing with others, we create meaning. We think about what others say and consider our own viewpoint and opinions. We learn about our own thinking when we converse with others.

Supporting what children know

One way to support children's thinking is to help them use what they already know as they read. The more children know about a topic, the more they will expand on this knowledge when they read. However, sometimes children assume a stance that is characteristic of watching TV. They sit and watch the words, rather than actively thinking about the meaning. Readers need to be active participants. They need to predict what will happen in the story and make associations between what they already know and what they are reading. Then they can use what they know to create meaning. As a mentor, you can invite the child to think about what he or she already knows about the topic. This will build success and encourage active thinking.

Using the retelling strategy

Another way you can help children understand stories is to ask them to retell what they have read. Retelling is an important activity and helps children increase their understanding of what is read. Think about the number of times you have told someone about a headline you read in the newspaper or information you read in a magazine. This involved retelling. The ability to retell is a key process in reading comprehension that we all use every day. Retelling helps children think about what in the story is important to tell another person. They ask themselves, "What would this person like to know about what I just read?" Deciding what is important to retell is a critical part of discussing what we have read. You can help readers understand a selection by asking them to retell it. You can also ask them to talk about how the selection began, the characters, the actions in the story, and how the story ended. In this way you support children's understanding by encouraging them to talk about the story, what they learned from it, and how their experiences are similar to what they have read.

Building reading fluency

Another aspect of good reading is reading fluently. Fluent reading means reading words in phrases. For example, when we read the words "a black cat," we read these words together because they form a mental picture in our mind. Reading words in meaningful phrases is an important element of fluent reading. Fluent reading also means reading without long pauses. When children get stuck on a word, their fluency decreases. Fluent reading results from reading selections that are easy to read and selections in which the reader easily understands the meaning and recognizes the words. Many young children read favorite books over and over again. This increases the their fluency, success, and enjoyment.

Rethinking for meaning

As children read, they continually ask themselves, "Is this making sense?" When children check what they are reading, they are determining if the words they are reading and their understanding fit together to make a complete idea. If things don't make sense, they may stop to rethink what they are reading. They may check the words and think about the overall meaning. This ability develops over time, but even young children can check to see if what they are reading is making sense.

Children check not only their reading, but also their writing. They ask themselves if what they are writing is making sense.

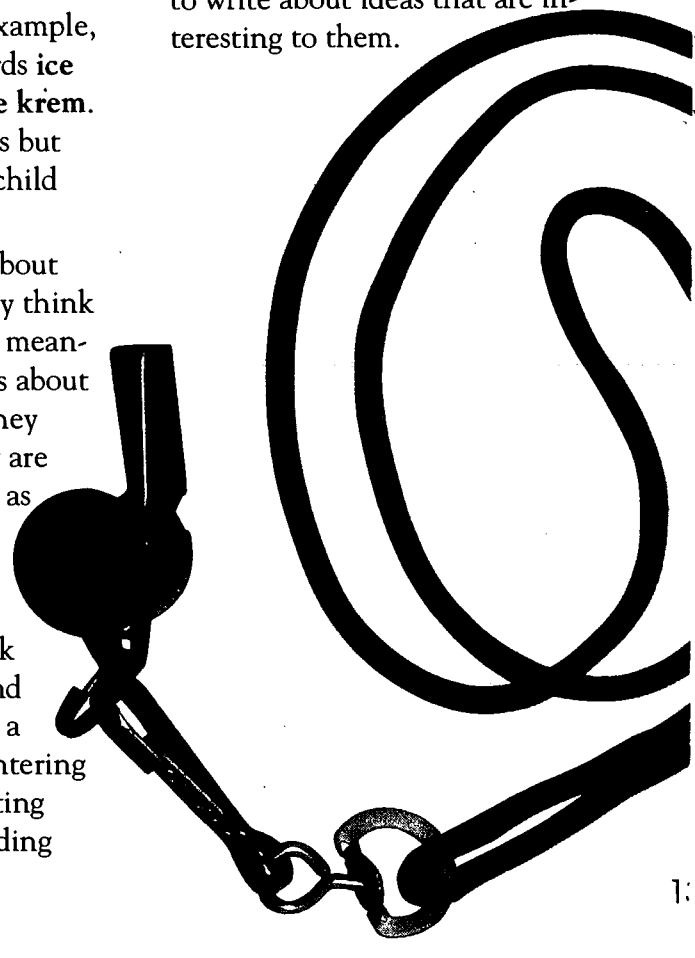
Connecting with writing

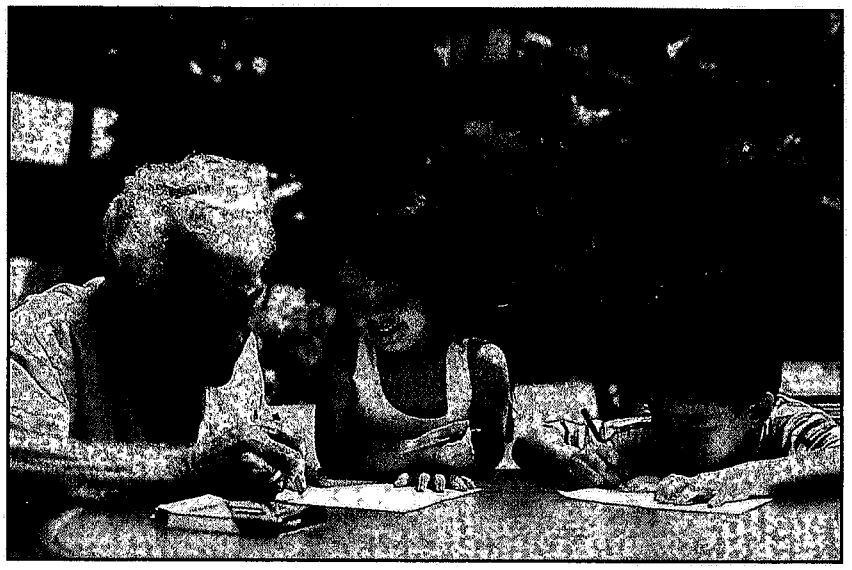
Reading and writing are closely connected. Each time young children write, they have to think about what makes sense to a reader. They also have to think about letters and sounds in words. The knowledge children gain about print when writing helps them figure out words when they read. Children who aren't yet writing do things that are similar to those who aren't reading. Nonwriters imitate what writing looks like just as nonreaders pretend to read a book. Often they write letters they know or the first letter of a word. We call this invented spelling because they are writing down letters that seem to fit based on their knowledge of letter-sound patterns. For example, a child may spell the words **ice cream** with the letters **ise krem**. We accept these attempts but indicate they are using "child writing."

As children write about what they have read, they think about a message that has meaning just as a reader thinks about what the story means. They check to see if what they are writing makes sense, just as readers ask themselves if what they are reading makes sense. Finally, as children write, they think about the letter and sound patterns in words, just as a reader does when encountering an unfamiliar word. Writing supports reading and reading supports writing.

Developing a positive attitude

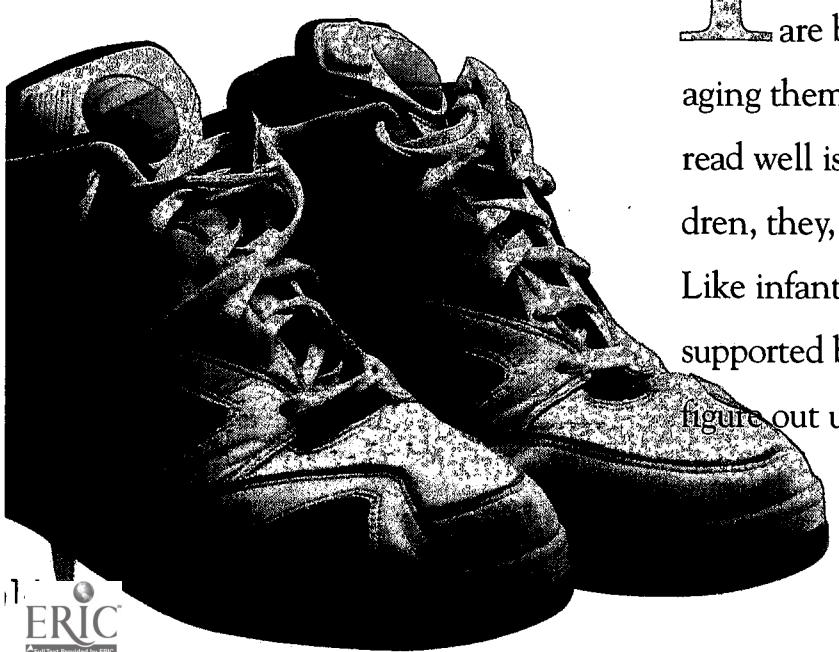
Last but not least, reading develops when children have a positive attitude. Children will be motivated to read when they have a choice of activities, when they can read about topics that interest them, and when their reading experiences result in success. Giving children a choice between two or three books to read allows them to choose materials that are personally interesting to them. You can also encourage a positive attitude toward reading by using the child's interests when discussing and reading stories. Likewise, letting children choose topics for writing will also motivate them to write about ideas that are interesting to them.





TUTORS GUIDE STRATEGIES

Infants make many attempts to walk before they actually take their first steps on their own. In this process, parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles are by their side holding their hands and encouraging them to take a step and try to walk. Learning to read well isn't much different. As adults read with children, they, too, are by their side supporting their literacy. Like infants, children's first attempts at reading alone are supported by adults offering prompts to help them figure out unfamiliar words.



When to offer support

As children learn to walk, adults sometimes offer a supporting hand and other times let them try on their own. Adults seem to know instinctively when to help and when not to help. Assisting children as they read is similar to this. Adults don't need to correct all mistakes, especially if the mistake does not change the meaning of the sentence or story. However, it is important to help children figure out those mistakes that do change the meaning.

When offering support, do so without interrupting in the middle of a sentence. Let the child read to the end of the sentence and then say, "Try that again. That didn't make sense." This allows the child time to figure out how to correct the mistake. Allowing children to read to the end of the sentence rather than interrupting when the mistake is made encourages children to think through their mistakes.

Encourage children to try

As they did when they learned to walk, young children try new ways to figure out unfamiliar words when they read. Sometimes they are successful and continue reading. Other times they stumble, make mistakes, and need assistance. At these times readers usually try several ways to figure out a word. You can provide invaluable support to children trying out different ways to figure out unfamiliar words. There are many methods to help children focus on overall meaning to correct their mistakes. You can say,

> Did that make sense?
>
> Did that sound right to you?
>
> Read the sentence again and say a word that makes sense.

These prompts focus the child to make sense of the reading. If the student still can't figure out the word, then you might say, "Try reading the sentence again. Think about the meaning, say the beginning sound, and make a real word, then keep reading to see if the sentence makes sense."

In this prompt, the child can use the other words in the sentence and the beginning letter sound to figure out the unknown word. The more clues children use to figure out words the more likely they are to say the word and become independent, fluent readers.

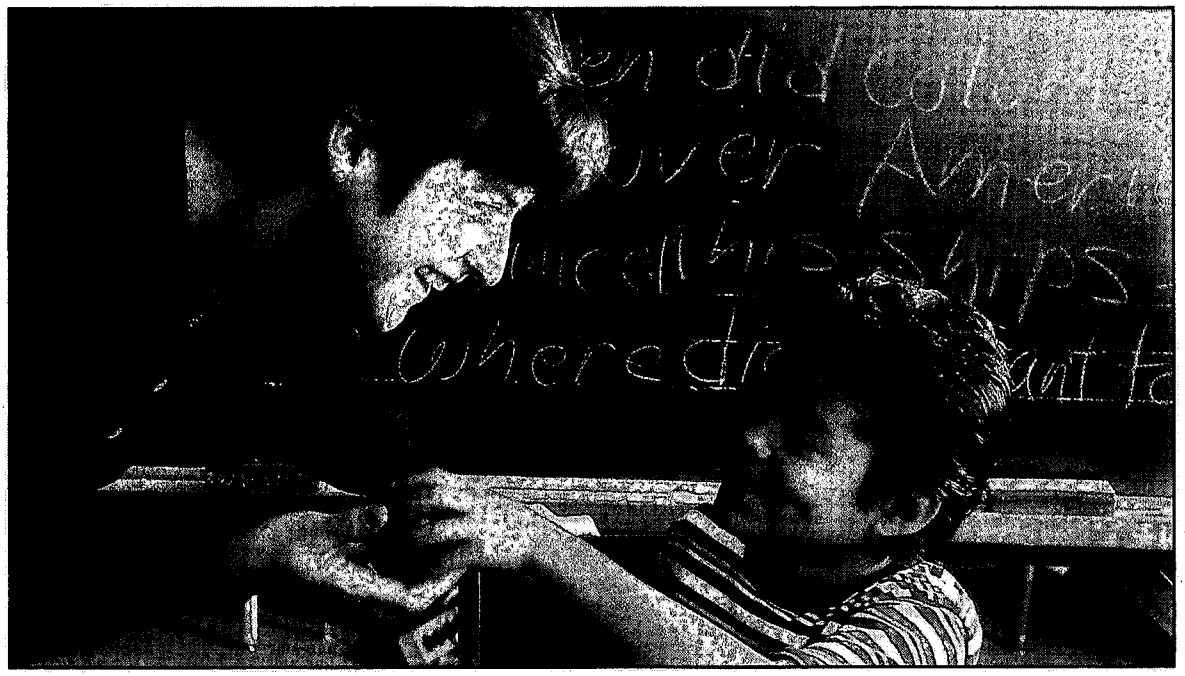
The meaning of a sentence plus the pictures on a page can also help children figure out words. Encourage your child to use the pictures and the words in the sentence to figure out the unfamiliar word. At times it may be helpful for you to reread the sentence up to the unfamiliar word and let the child fill in a word that would make sense. This allows the child to regain the sense of the passage and predict what the word is by thinking of the sentence meaning and looking at the letters in the word. Sometimes the length of the word will help a child to figure it out. If the child says the word **cat** based on the meaning from the text when the word is **kitten**, at the end of a passage you might reread the sentence to discuss the word again. Mention that the word **cat** is shorter than the word in the text. Ask the child to look at the beginning of the word and how long the word is, and have the child try the word again. He or she should be able to figure out that, because the word begins with a **k** and looks quite long, it probably isn't **cat**. By using the meaning of the sentence first, then looking at beginning sounds and the length of a word, children use several clues to figure out words. These prompts help students develop flexible ways to figure out words.

Support with hints and praise

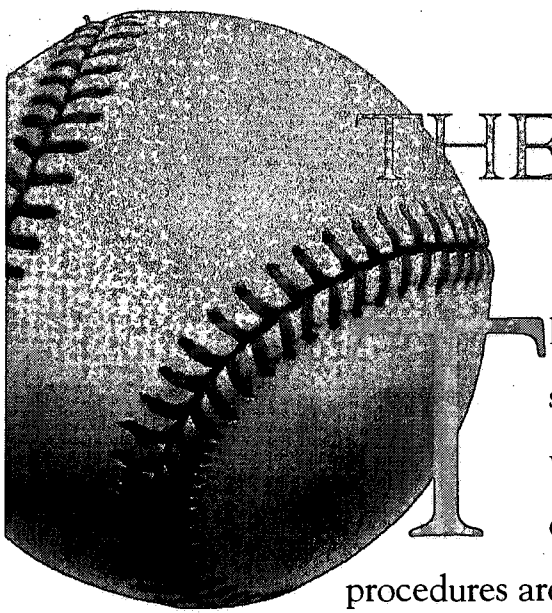
It is probably unnecessary to have the child sound out every letter in a word to figure it out. This is difficult and doesn't have much meaning. Encourage the child to think about the overall meaning, then look at the picture clues, the beginning or ending letters, the length of the word, and the sentence to figure out a word. These prompts help children use more than one clue at a time.

You support children's thinking by giving hints and encouraging children to self-correct their mistakes. As you observe students using self-correcting strategies, praise them with comments like, "Did you notice how you reread that sentence to see if it made sense? That worked well." This type of comment directly praises the strategy the child is using. It will help the child repeat the same behavior.

Supporting children as they figure out unfamiliar words is critical to their becoming independent readers.



Planning THE TUTORING SESSION



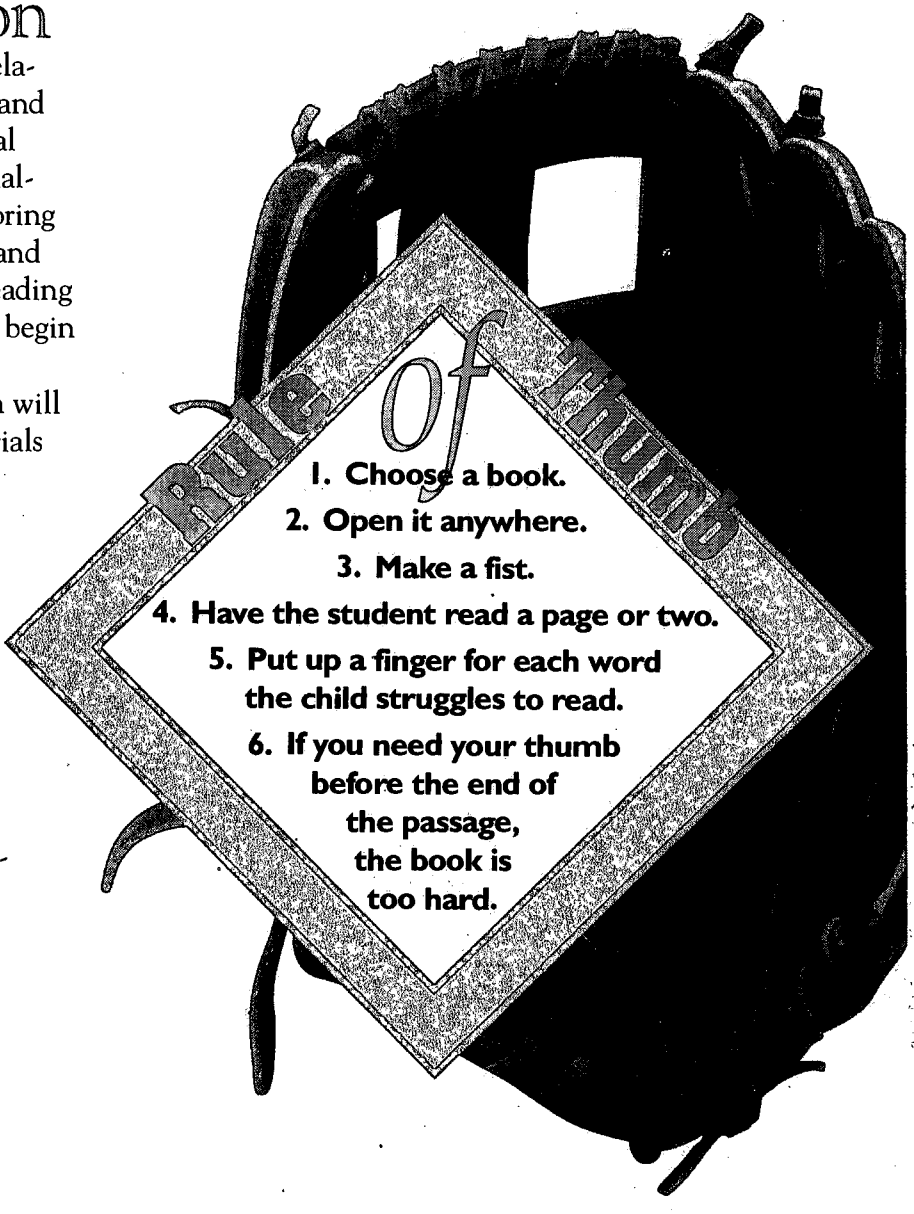
The goal of this handbook is to provide an outline for a tutoring session that helps tutors and teachers develop independent readers who read fluently and understand what they read. There are six elements in the session and each works toward this goal. Specific procedures are outlined in this section along with prompts and questions that you can use as you work with children. Embedded in the procedures for tutoring are ideas for children who are already reading and writing as well as for those who are not yet reading and writing.

You may not be able to complete all six elements in one session. You will have to decide which parts seem to be most important for your child. At other times, the classroom teacher may have activities for you that will be important to complete.

The tutoring session is designed to encourage a personal relationship between you and your child and to emphasize that reading and writing are social processes to be shared. Because choices and challenges are integral parts of the session, the tutoring session will motivate children to read both in and out of the classroom. By using plenty of easy reading material, the child will experience success and begin to read voluntarily.

The different parts of the tutoring session will require certain materials. The following materials are important to have on hand:

- pencils, pens, and paper for tutor and child
- a notebook for journal writing and comments; one for you and one for the child
- your tutor's handbook for quick reference as necessary
- appropriate forms from the handbook photocopied for use, such as the evaluation tools, charts, and the tutor's evaluation form
- reading materials that are familiar to the student, books for shared reading, and books for pleasure reading
- a clock or watch nearby to judge the proposed time frames

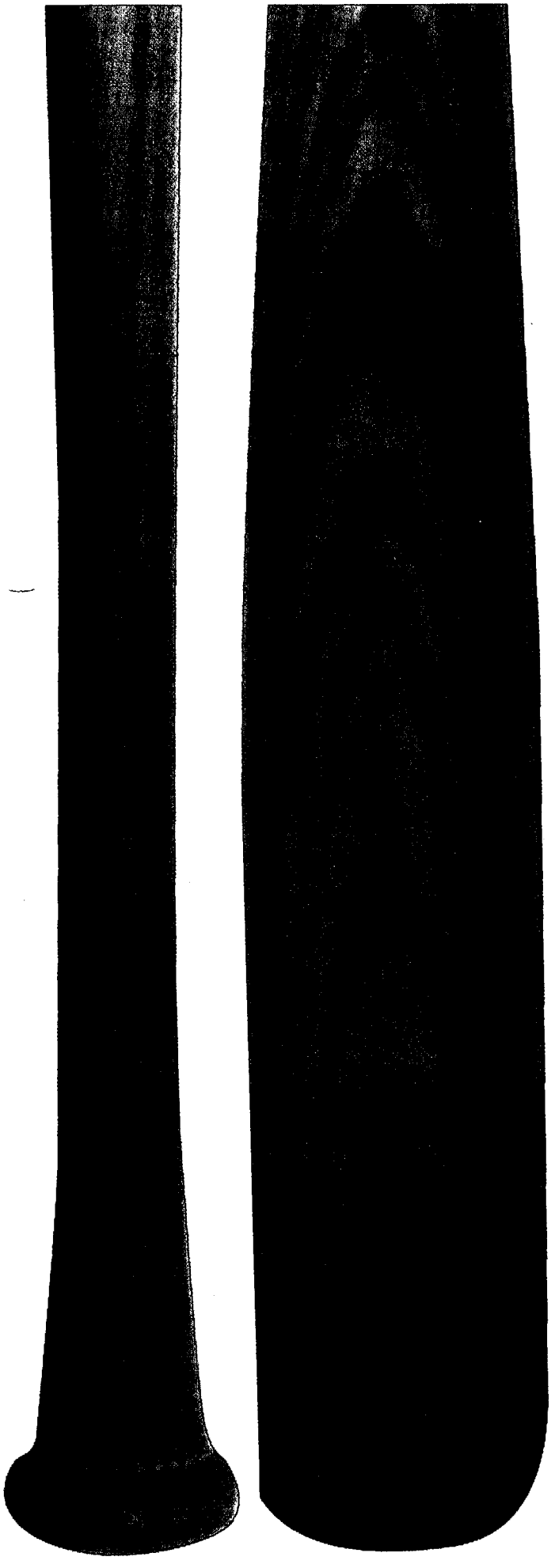


Selecting books for tutoring

Nothing is more motivating than success. Finding books that are right for your child will encourage success for both of you during your sessions. In most programs, the reading specialist will help you identify books that fit the interests and abilities of the child you are tutoring. You will need to have available books you and your child have already read, and you will also introduce a new book during each session. Books that are "just right" for the child help ensure success. "Just right" means not too hard and not too easy. A book is too hard when the child makes too many mistakes after you have read it twice (you have read it to him or her and then you have read it together). One way to decide on "just right" books is to use the Rule of Thumb.

What to do if you choose a book that is too hard

When children read aloud on their own, they may make frequent mistakes. This means that the book is too hard. When children begin to read and the book is too hard, they will make mistakes even on words they know well. At this time, simply chime in and continue reading with them until the end of the selection. Then select an easier book for the next session. Do not put this book in the pile of familiar books that you use at the beginning of each session. If you are having difficulty finding "just right" books, consult with the reading specialist or classroom teacher to find some easier books.



Finding "just right" books for young readers

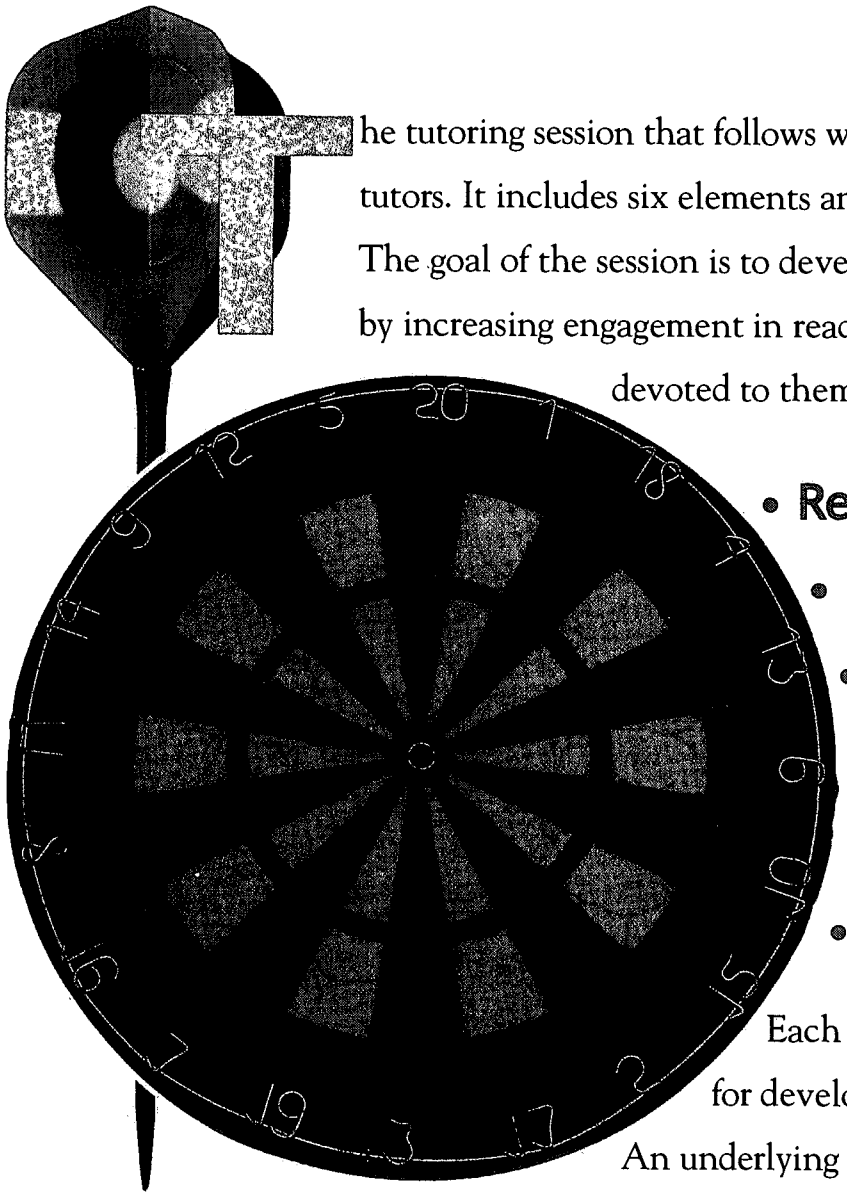
Sometimes the classroom teacher or reading specialist will have books for you, but other times you will need to find a book on your own. Predictability is one of the key features of books that develop fluency. "Predictable" books have language patterns that are repeated throughout the text. If these patterns are repeated on every page, then books are often easier for children to read. Key pictures that depict the action and content of the sentences on the page also increase predictability. If the page has a picture of a house of straw and the text reads, "The first little pig had a house made of straw" then the sentence is easier to read because the picture provides clues for the words on the page. Young readers can then use the pictures to predict what the words say.

Where to find books

There are many resources within your community for finding books. If you are working in a public school, there will be a variety of books in the classroom as well as the school library. The public library also will have many books that are easy to read and fit the purposes of developing fluency. The children's librarian at the public library will be able to help you locate "just right" books. Often curriculum libraries at colleges and universities have books for young children. Be sure to ask someone to help you select books if you are unsure what your child can read.

Some other sources for books are garage sales and used bookstores. If you ask for the children's section of a bookstore, you will often find a wealth of "just right" books. They are usually not very expensive and offer the opportunity for the child to reread books many times because they do not have to be returned. You can even give the books to the student when you have finished with them.

Selecting books that provide opportunities for success is critical to a volunteer tutoring program. If your child is not reading fluently, then ask a teacher or another tutor to help you find the books that fit your child. Nothing is more motivating than success.



THE SIX ELEMENTS OF THE TUTORING SESSION

The tutoring session that follows was designed specifically for volunteer tutors. It includes six elements and lasts for about 30 to 45 minutes. The goal of the session is to develop fluent reading with understanding by increasing engagement in reading. The six elements and the time devoted to them are as follows:

- **Read Old Favorites**
- **Read Together**
- **Write Together**
- **Read for Enjoyment**
- **Talk About Words**
- **Summarize Success**

Each of the six elements has a specific purpose for developing fluent reading with understanding. An underlying goal is to encourage children to read and talk about numerous stories. Together you will read and discuss many selections including easy, familiar stories. This will increase the child's success and enjoyment.

The elements of the tutoring session work together to develop motivated readers who choose to read for their own purposes. You can emphasize the social nature of reading by interacting personally with the student. The sections that follow illustrate how the tutor and student will interact during tutoring.

1. Read Old Favorites (5 minutes)

Books are like old friends. You know them well and they are fun to visit again and again. Like a visit with an old friend, reading something familiar is fun and supports the development of the reader. Old favorites are selections children have already read and know well and are the first thing to read in the tutoring session. We recommend rereading at least two old favorites if time allows. This should take four to five minutes. As you become more acquainted with the child you may read as many as five old favorites during this time frame. Rereading familiar selections helps students practice reading and notice features about print and meaning. When words are within the familiar context of a well-known story or informational piece, they are easy to figure out. Thus, young children can see word patterns and sentence patterns in familiar surroundings. When children reread material they know well, it is both fun and satisfying. The experience of reading old favorites begins the session with a series of successful reading experiences that increase motivation for the more challenging tasks that lie ahead.

What to do:

1. Obtain two or three books that the student has already read and place them in front of the child. Initially you can ask the child's classroom teacher or reading specialist for book selections that will be familiar and easy to read. As the weeks progress, you can use books you have read together during your session.

2. Ask the student which book he or she would like to read.

3. Have the child read the story orally to you.

4. Sometimes, children confuse or forget words. When this happens simply begin reading with them to help them regain the flow of the story.

5. Other times, offer support for a forgotten word by saying, "Does that make sense?" "What's the story about?" or "Can the picture help you get the word?"

Other suggestions:

1. For children who aren't yet reading, read the story aloud and encourage the child to chant along with you. Have the child retell the story using the pictures. Then reread the story together.

2. You may want to use familiar, easy poetry. Short, familiar poems can serve the same purpose as story books. Short informational material such as information dealing with science or social studies also can serve as a warm-up and engage students in fluent reading.

2. Read Together (10 minutes)

Everybody loves to learn new things. Reading is not any different. New selections provide new challenges for young children. As children learn from the new challenge, their motivation increases because they begin to view reading as a challenging yet successful experience. In this phase of the session, you and your child together select something new to read. You discuss what the story or informational piece could be about by looking at the pictures and thinking about what you know. You begin reading the book aloud and then invite the child to follow. This supportive beginning of unfamiliar selections is continued throughout this phase by stopping to discuss what is happening and what might happen next. Finally, the child reads the new selection alone with only minimal support from you.

What to do:

1. Together, select a story or informational passage to read. Predictable books that have rhyme, rhythm, and repetition are very helpful for kindergarten, first, and second graders. Third graders can use easy chapter books. You should have three or four books available that would be appropriate and let the child choose one to read. If you are working in a school, you can ask the child's classroom teacher for appropriate book selections. If you are outside of a school setting the reading specialist or

the supervisor of your tutoring program should be able to help you with materials.

2. Familiarize yourselves with the reading. Review the title of the story and leaf through the book looking at pictures. Discuss what might happen in the book. Build interest by talking about the book. You might say, "Let's look at the title and cover and try to guess what this story will be about" or "Have you ever done the things that are in this book?"

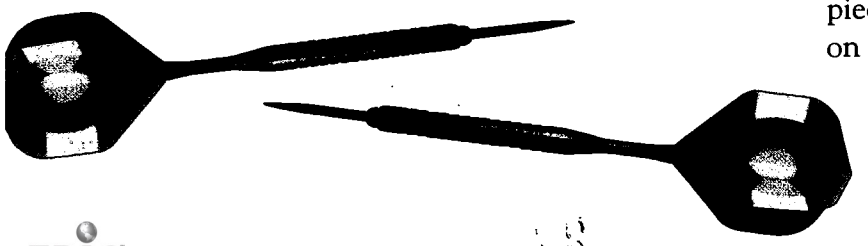
3. Read the book aloud. Read the book to the child using appropriate expression and a fluent rhythm so as to convey the meaning of the selection. As you read, stop and ask, "What do you think will happen next?" "If you were in this story, what would you do?"

4. After you finish the first reading, ask open-ended questions that encourage a higher level of engagement in the selection, such as, "Which part of the story did you like best?" "Which part of the story didn't you like?" For informational books ask, "What information that we read did you already know?" "What new information did you learn?"

5. Read the book together. Read the story a second time and invite the child to join in the reading by saying, "I know you can help me read this." As you read, encourage the child to chime in when the words and language patterns are predictable. Books often use rhyme or repetition and children can naturally fill in the words. Pause for the child to fill in the predictable words.

6. Discuss the story again. After the second reading, briefly discuss the story by leafing through the pages. Read aloud any troublesome phrases, pointing out features of individual words such as beginning letters or rhymes.

7. Let the child read the book alone. On the third reading of the story, ask the child to read independently. You can read along with the child or use prompting strategies if he or she stumbles over words or phrases.



Other suggestions:

1. For children who aren't yet reading, use the third reading as a chance for both you and your child to read the book together again. You should try to give the child the opportunity to read on his or her own as much as possible.

2. Another strategy for the third reading is to read a line of the text, pointing to the words while reading. Then, you ask the child to repeat the same line as he or she points to the words while reading.

3. As your child chooses more challenging texts, the first reading of the story can be read together and the child can read alone on the second reading. Usually, this change occurs near the end of second grade when children are more independent readers.

3. Write Together (5–10 minutes)

Writing with children is a creative and challenging experience. Through their writing children often reveal much about their personalities. Each time they write, they must think about the thoughts they would like to communicate to others. Writing encourages us to think about how words are put together to form a meaningful message. Likewise, when we write, we think about how words are formed and their consistent letter patterns, and writing activities can help you show letter patterns in words to a child. You can support children's writing efforts by helping to brainstorm ideas for writing. By writing together, you can demonstrate how you put your ideas in writing. As you write with children you may want to consider the following tips.

- Focus on the meaning in the child's writing by asking, "What are you trying to say in your writing?"
- Accept the child's attempts at writing even though spelling may not always be accurate.
- Occasionally, have the child select a special piece of writing he or she likes, and together work on editing for spelling and punctuation.

Activities for writing

There are many writing activities you and your child can do together. We suggest you choose one of the following three when you begin working with your child.

Writing side by side

In this activity, you and the child write your own ideas, but do so side by side. You each have a journal for writing and date your journal entry. You both write for three to four minutes and then share what you have written with each other.

What to do: (For children who are writing and those who are not yet able to write)

1. Tell each other what you want to write about. You will each have your own notebook called a journal for the tutoring sessions.

2. After brainstorming ideas, write in your journals as you sit side by side.

3. If the child says he or she can't write, tell him or her to pretend write, write a letter to represent an entire word, or draw a picture for the story and label it.

4. After three or four minutes, share what you have written with each other.

5. When reviewing your writing you should take the time to point out and discuss patterns in writing, such as all the words that have the letter "b" in them, or words that end with the letter patterns such as "an" or "at."

I write, you write

This activity involves composing together. This is truly a shared experience because what is written is a cooperative undertaking. This type of shared writing could take the form of a story or a report. You and your child write something together, deciding on a topic and alternatively writing sentences. By writing for a specified time, each alternately continues the development of the written piece.

What to do:

1. Together, select a topic of interest.

2. Brainstorm ideas about the topic before writing.

3. Using the topic selected, begin writing in the child's journal. You begin by writing for one minute. Be sure to use words the child can read.

4. Read what you wrote and then talk about what might come next.

5. Pass the journal to the child who then writes for one minute. If the child can't spell a word, encourage him or her to write just one letter for a word. After the child is finished ask him or her to read back what has been written.

6. Together, read what has been written so far. You write again for a minute.

7. Continue exchanging the notebook for a few more minutes or until the story is complete. Use your judgment as to how long and how many times the book can be passed according to the ability and attention span of the child.

8. When the story is completely written, read the story.

9. Revise any parts as necessary.

Written dialogue

The third exercise we suggest is to have a conversation through writing. In this activity, you use one journal and write to the student. This can be a comment or a short question. The child writes a response to you. This written conversation continues for several minutes. Then you discuss your "conversation."

What to do:

1. Write a comment or a question to the child. Use words that are familiar to the child.

2. The child reads what you wrote and writes an answer or response.

3. Read the child's response, then write a comment about what the child wrote.

4. The journal is passed to the child who then writes a response. If the child can't spell a word, encourage him or her to write just one letter for a word. When the child is finished ask him or her to read back what has been written.

5. Use your judgment as to how long and how many times the book can be passed according to the ability and attention span of the child.

4. Read for Enjoyment (5–10 minutes)

Good readers become good readers by reading. The more children read, the more fluent they become. Although it seems like a simple principle, time is often not set aside in school to read for pleasure. Each day, children need time to read self-selected materials for their own enjoyment. At all sessions, it is important to set aside some time to read for enjoyment. After the designated time for reading, you can share what you have read.

What to do:

1. Select a book for yourself and ask the child to choose a book. If there is a reading area nearby with a rug and pillows, it is nice to sit comfortably on the floor and read.

2. Show each other the books that you will be reading.

3. Take turns discussing what you think the books are about.

3. Read silently for three to four minutes.

4. Take turns talking about what you have read.

Other suggestions:

1. The procedures for children who aren't reading yet are the same, except that instead of reading they will be looking through the book at the pictures and the print.

2. You can make reading particularly enjoyable by reading aloud to children. When reading to children, select an interesting book. Practice reading ahead of time, if possible, so you can provide a good model for reading that is fluent and expressive. As you begin, discuss some background information about the book and set a purpose for reading, such as to listen for the part of the story you like the best. When the story is read, focus the discussion around issues of interest to you and your child.

3. Some children enjoy reading by listening to a story on headsets and following along with the book.

4. If you have a felt board and story characters available, read the story and let the child manipulate the felt figures. Then switch roles, so that the child reads and you move the characters.

5. Talk About Words (5 minutes)

As we have said, children learn to read by reading. In fact, children learn words by reading books, magazines, stories, and encyclopedias; working on the computer; writing; and doing other literacy-related activities. Words are everywhere. Children learn so many words so fast that it is impossible to teach every one of them; instead, children learn new words and new word meanings by reading and writing. Why are words so important? They represent the ideas and experiences we have. Specific words often convey the key ideas and meaning of a passage. If a key word is unfamiliar and a child does not recognize it or understand its meaning, then the passage becomes very difficult to read.

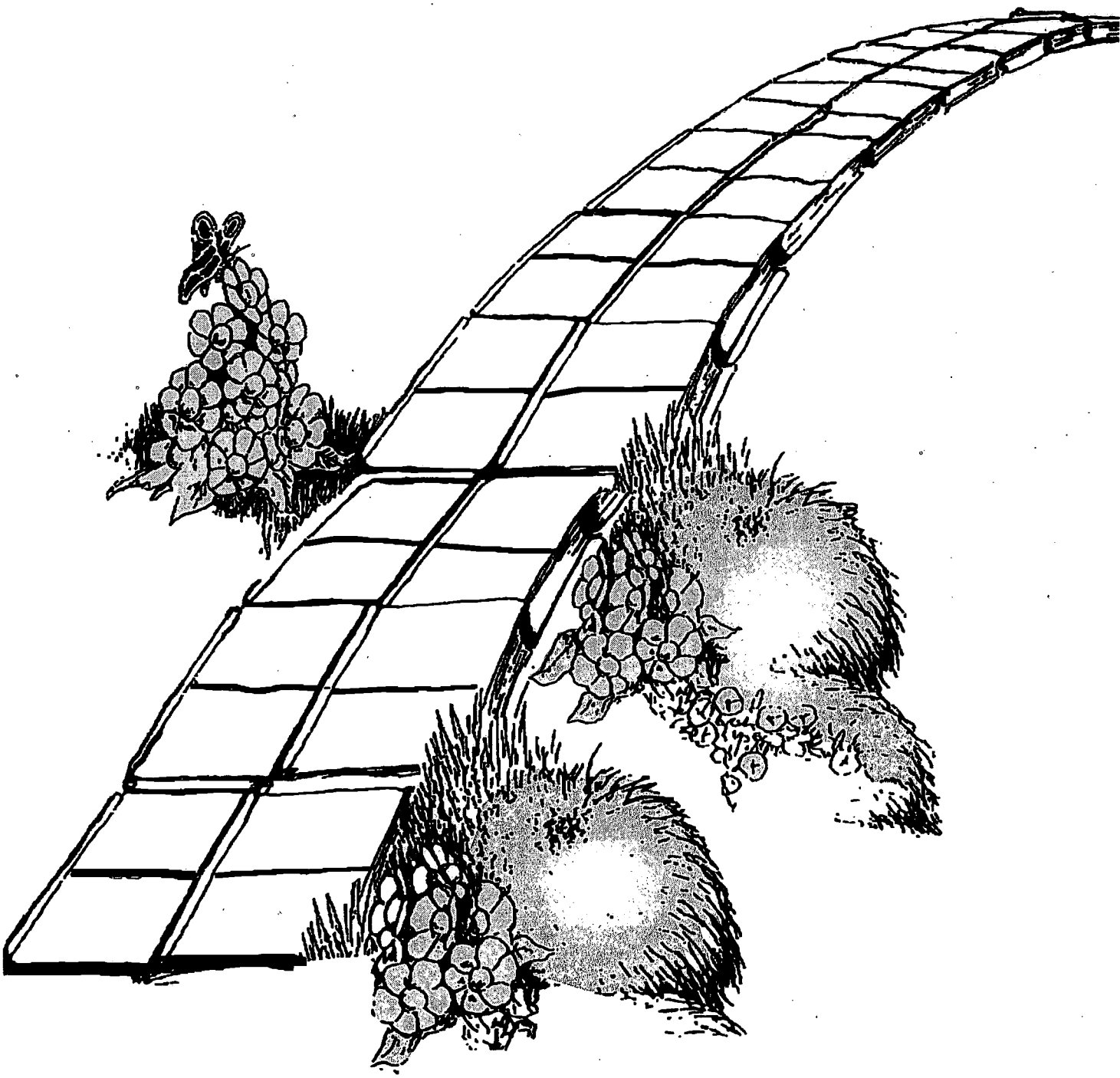
You can help children by discussing words so that when children read they will notice features or patterns in words. You can also show children how you can use the other words in a sentence to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

As you talk about an interesting word each day, you help your child use and refine these processes. In this part of the lesson, each of you selects an interesting word from that day's session. These words can be recorded on the chart entitled "Words: Bridging the New and the Known" that is included on page 24. After you have selected your word, talk about why it is interesting, then discuss its features and what it means. Finally, use the word in a sentence.

Words: Bridging the New and the Known

[redacted]

It's fun to learn and practice new words and to work with familiar words. Record a new word in each of the stones from the new to the known!



What to do:

1. Each of you select an interesting word that you encountered during reading. The word can also be one that the classroom teacher is emphasizing.

2. Write your words on the chart (you write your word and the child writes his or her word).

3. Start by telling why you chose that word. The child follows your lead and talks about the word that he or she chose.

4. Talk about the features of the word, such as the letters that make up the word, patterns found in the word, and other words that rhyme with it. The child follows your lead and describes the features of his or her word.

5. Explain the meaning of your word and use it in a sentence. The child explains the meaning of his or her word and uses it in a sentence.

6. Summarize Success (5 minutes)

Everyone likes to talk about their successes, and young children are certainly no exception. Each tutoring session closes with a time for you and your child to review what you completed during that session. You can discuss the activities that went well and what you might like to include at the next session. Children will begin to take charge of their own literacy when they are encouraged to describe and evaluate what they are learning.

Summarizing success helps children talk about what they did well. Success is an extremely motivating factor in all life activities, and we tend to repeat successful activities. This part of the tutoring plan works to increase motivation and success. By summarizing what went well, the tutor and student will be motivated to continue those activities that worked.

What to do:

1. Talk about the activities carried out during the tutoring session. Together, fill out the photocopied form "Look What I Did!" included on page 26. Use the following questions to record the child's answers in your journal:

- Which part of our session today did you like best? Why?
- What parts of reading and writing are you best at?
- What parts of reading and writing do you think you need help with?
- What new things should we do next time?

2. Review the old favorites you read and write down the names on the form provided.

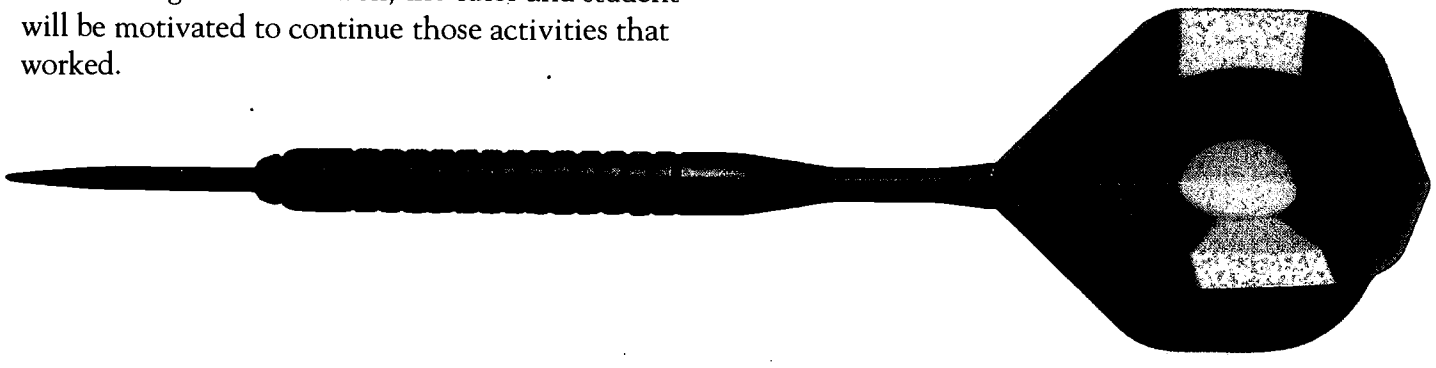
3. Review the new book or passage you read together. You might write down one thing that you found interesting about the book.

4. Discuss your writing together. Have the child record what he or she liked best.

5. List the book(s) or book chapter that your child read for enjoyment.

6. Ask the child to write what he or she did well that day.

7. Ask the child to write down what he or she might like to do next time.



Look What I Did!

Name _____

1. Today, I read _____old favorites.

   They were _____

   _____

   _____

2. Today, I read a new book called _____

   _____ by _____

   What I like about this book is _____

   _____

3. Today I wrote about _____

   The part I liked best about writing is _____

4. Today, I chose to read a book for fun called _____

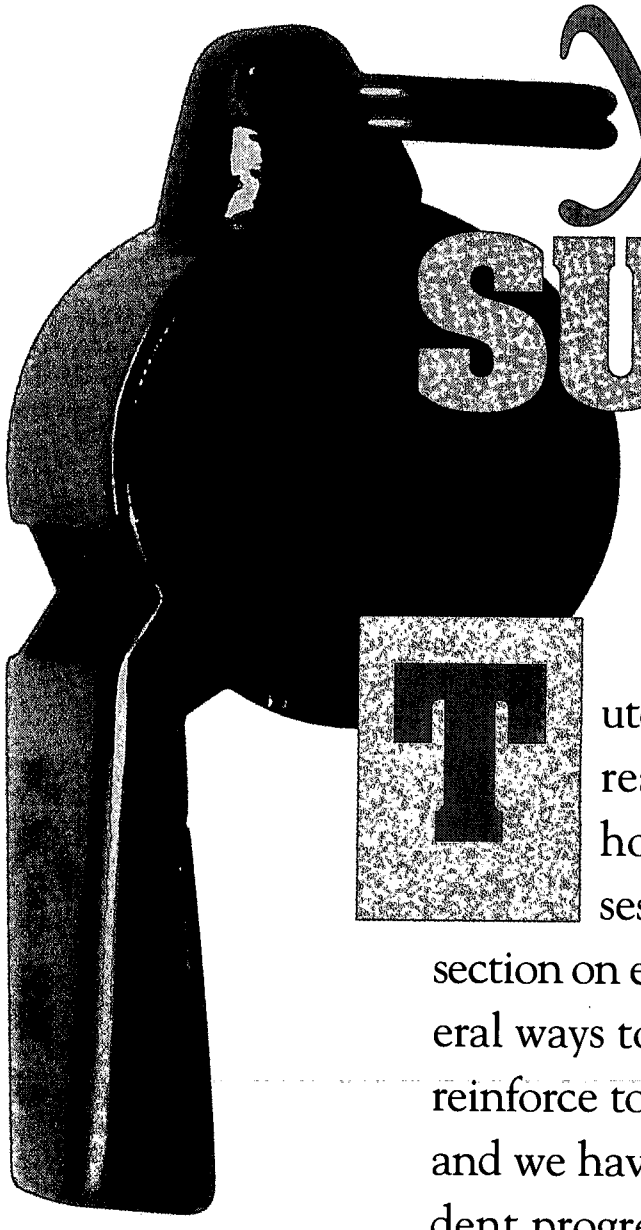
   _____ by _____

   I chose this book because _____

5. Today, I was good at _____

6. For next time, I will work on _____

MEASURING *your* CHILD'S SUCCESS



Tutoring is designed to motivate children to read voluntarily both in school and at home. Understanding how the tutoring session is progressing is important. In the section on evaluating your tutoring you will find several ways to assess progress. It also is important to reinforce to children the ways they are succeeding, and we have included tools to help you assess student progress. These records are shared with the teacher and reading supervisor to evaluate tutoring.

It is important to keep records concerning the progress of the child you are tutoring. The purpose for keeping records is to demonstrate the success that the student is experiencing in reading and writing. These records are shared with the teacher so that the two of you can determine the strengths and needs of the child. These records can be a checklist, a sample of work from a tutoring session, an interview with the student, or remarks or notes about progress. Sometimes you may find it useful to audiotape a child's reading as a tool to measure progress.

Help the child keep a collection of work from the tutoring sessions in a folder or a large envelope. From time to time you and your child can look over the work he or she has done, and discuss progress. These materials can be collected for every session.

Records should be shared with the child's teacher, the reading specialist, and the individual supervising the tutoring program. Some record-keeping strategies include

- keeping a journal about what you do at each tutoring session,
- recording what books the child is reading,
- keeping samples of the child's writing from week to week,
- recording success that the child is enjoying, and
- audiotaping the child's reading.

Other measures of success

There are also more formal types of measures to assess student progress. In the following sections we describe three that we feel are important. They deal with the child's (1) motivation for reading and writing, (2) reading fluency, and (3) comprehension of material read.

Motivation

One of the most important goals of tutoring is to help children learn to like reading and writing more than they have in the past. On page 29 is an interview that will help you find out your child's feelings about reading and writing.

Fluency

One goal of this tutoring program is to help children develop fluent reading. Fluent reading involves smoothly reading words in meaningful phrases. You can evaluate your child's fluency as you listen to him or her read orally. As you listen, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the child's reading fairly smooth?
- Does the child read words in meaningful phrases?
- Does the child's verbal expression convey the meaning of the text?

Using these questions and the Ratings for Oral Reading Fluency scale provided below, rate the fluency of the child's reading. We suggest making a chart with the name of the book, the date, and the fluency rating. You can keep this record in the back of your journal. It can be shared with the reading specialist who can help you decide if it is necessary to change the type of books you are using.

Ratings for Oral Reading Fluency

Rating 1- The child slowly reads one word at a time with many pauses to figure out words, and repetitions to figure out meaning.

Rating 2- The child reads slowly with some pauses to figure out words. There are some repetitions. Occasionally the child reads in phrases of two or three words.

Rating 3- The child reads words in phrases with a lively rhythm and a sense of expression.

Using the rating, you can determine if the reading material being used is too easy or too difficult for the child. A Rating 1 indicates that the child is reading stories that are too difficult and you likely need to find easier stories. Consult with the reading specialist to find material. A Rating 2 indicates that the child would improve by rereading the story. Simply put the book in the old favorite stack and reread it at another session. A Rating 3 indicates fluent, independent reading. After several weeks of books that are read fluently, you may need to increase the difficulty of the stories you are using. Again, we recommend that you consult the reading specialist to decide what materials to use.

Motivation Interview

Directions: Tell the child that you would like to find out more about what kids like to do and how they feel about reading and writing. Ask each question in the interview and read the multiple choice responses.

How often would you like your teacher to read to the class?
(2) every day (1) almost every day (0) not often

Do you like to read books by yourself?
(2) yes (1) it's OK (0) no

Which would you most like to have?
(2) a new book (1) a new game (0) new clothes

Do you tell your friends about books and stories you read?
(2) a lot (1) sometimes (0) never

How do you feel when you read out loud to someone?
(2) good (1) OK (0) bad

Do you like to read during your free time?
(2) yes (1) it's OK (0) I don't read in my free time

If someone gave you a book for a present, how would you feel?
(2) happy (1) OK (0) not very happy, dissappointed

Do you take storybooks home from school to read?
(2) almost every day (1) sometimes (0) not often

Do you read books out loud to someone in your family?
(2) almost every day (1) sometimes (0) not often

What kind of reader are you?
(2) I'm a very good reader (1) I'm OK (0) I'm not very good

Learning to read is:
(2) easy (1) a little hard (0) really hard

Do you like to write?
(2) yes (1) it's OK (0) I'd rather do something else

Do you write in your free time?
(2) a lot (1) a little (0) not at all

What do you like to read best?
(2) books and magazines (1) school work (0) nothing

Adapted from Gambrell, L.B. (1993). Me and my reading scale. In *The impact of Running Start on the reading motivation of and behavior of first-grade children* (Unpublished Research Report). College Park, MD: University of Maryland, National Reading Research Center.

What to do:

1. Have the child read a section of the story orally.

2. Listen closely to how the student is reading.

3. Notice the pauses the child makes to figure out words.

4. Notice the repetition the child makes to figure out meaning.

5. Notice if the reading is word-by-word.

6. Notice how expressive the child's reading is.

7. Give the oral reading a rating with the fluency scale.

8. Record the name of the book, the date, and the fluency rating in your journal or on a chart.

Comprehension

One method of building reading comprehension is story retelling and rewriting. Story retelling and rewriting helps tutors evaluate a child's comprehension. As you are working with the child, you can easily assess how well the child can retell a story. Let children know that you will be asking them to retell a story or rewrite it before you read a story to them or they read it themselves. After you finish reading together, you can ask the child to retell the story. When you ask a child to retell or rewrite a story for the purposes of evaluation, you can say, "Please retell the story or rewrite the story as if you were telling it to a friend who has never heard it before." Do not offer prompts when evaluating retellings except for some general comments such as, "Then what happened?" or "Can you think of anything else about the story?" The Story Retelling and Rewriting Form provides a means for evaluating the child's oral or written retellings.

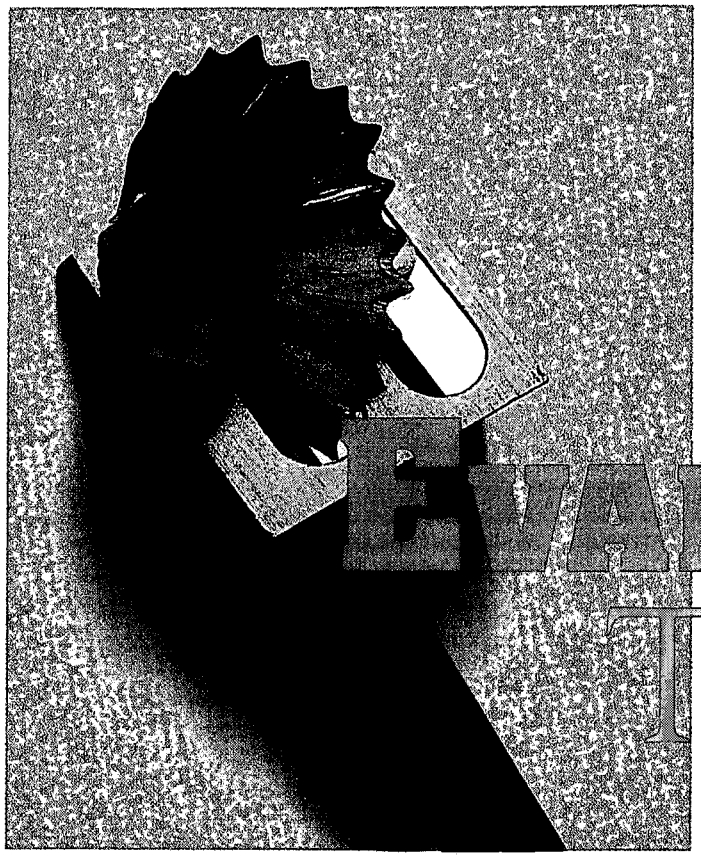
Story Retelling and Rewriting Form

Child's name _____ Date _____

Name of story _____

	Yes	No
Setting		
Begins retelling of story with an introduction	❑	❑
Includes statement about time and place	❑	❑
Characters		
Names main characters	❑	❑
Names other characters	❑	❑
Problem		
Tells about the main character's problem	❑	❑
Episodes (Story Action)		
Tells several key story actions	❑	❑
Resolution		
Includes the solution to the problem	❑	❑
Puts an ending on the story	❑	❑

Adapted from Morrow, L.M. (1997). Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Reprinted/adapted by permission.



EVALUATING YOUR TUTORING

As with all things we do, it is important to reflect upon our strengths and weaknesses in a given task. After each tutoring session, review the work that was done by the child and determine if he or she has made progress. Think about the relationship you have built with your student. Ask yourself if it is warm and supportive. At the back of your writing journal keep a space for writing a log that reflects the events and evaluation of each session. Put the date on each entry.

Discussing student progress with others is important. Frequently consult the teacher or reading specialist to determine if they have observed the child's progress. Showing the specialist your child's work and records can help both of you reflect on the success of the tutoring. Continually seek input about materials to use and strategies to reinforce. If possible, have the classroom teacher or supervisor of the tutoring program observe your tutoring session so they can discuss your interactions with the child. Set up a camcorder on a tripod and videotape a tutoring session as a tool for self-evaluation.

The form on page 32 is designed to help you reflect upon yourself as a tutor. It is designed to determine if you feel you are helping the child you are working with, and if you are enjoying the role as tutor. If you have concerns at any time about your tutoring, consult with those who are organizing your tutoring program.

Your important role

Being a tutor can have a significant effect on a child's reading. However, reading is a complex process to be taught by individuals who have had the appropriate training and experience. Most of the time, this is the child's classroom teacher or reading specialist. As a tutor, your role is to support children's work and offer experiences described in this handbook that are designed to enhance their reading and writing strategies, their attitude toward reading and writing, and, most important, their ability to read fluently.

Tutor's Self-Evaluation Form

1. Describe what happened during the tutoring session today.
   List activities the student participated in.

2. Describe the behavior of the child. Is he or she receptive to the tutoring?

3. Describe your rapport with the student. Does the child seem comfortable with you?
   Do you offer sincere and positive support?
   When you offer suggestions, are they made in a positive manner?

4. Do you look forward to your tutoring sessions? Yes? No? Why?

5. Do you think that the child you are working with is making progress with his or her reading and writing? Yes? No? Explain.

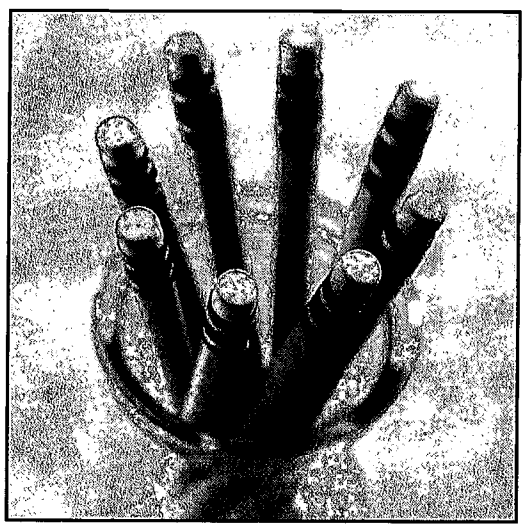
6. Have you received any feedback from the classroom teacher or reading specialist concerning your work with the child you tutor? If so, what did he or she say?

7. Have you received any feedback from the child's parents? Yes? No?
   If yes what feedback have you received?

8. Are you pleased that you decided to tutor? Yes? No? Explain.

Activities for Tutors

We have provided a basic plan for tutoring that can be used at volunteer tutoring sessions. However, you may wish to vary the strategies you use when working with stories that are familiar to children, working with new materials, working with writing, and reading for pleasure. The following are some ideas that will fit into the plan and help you to develop new strategies as well.



Helping children work with words

There are many ways to help children notice words. One of the best ways is to use the context in which a word occurs. Another very good method is to use several strategies together. The following are some recommended strategies.

- **Very Own Word collection.** We have already mentioned some ways your child can collect and learn new words. You can create Very Own Word cards for new words heard that the child wants to learn to read and write. Write the words on individual cards and keep them in a plastic bag or envelope. The child can read the word cards, use them when writing, alphabetize them, and sort them according to similar letters or meaning. You can build this collection at every session.

- **Write a message.** At the beginning of a tutoring session, you can ask the child to tell you about things he or she has done since you last met. The child can dictate the important things and you can write them down in the child's journal. Have the child read the message back, and then together look for patterns of print that will be important to talk about. For example, if the child is learning about the **ing** endings on words, take the time to look through the message to see if any of the words have that ending. If the child is having a problem with rules about sounds of vowels, look for words in the message that illustrate such rules and point out spelling patterns that effect the vowel sounds.

- **Environmental print.** Be sure that you make the child aware of all the words and print that is around, including the print in the classroom, on the walls, in the halls, outside in the neighborhood, and in the home. The print we are speaking of mostly takes the form of letters, words, and writing that is not being read from books, but can be found on food boxes, road signs, menus, and other places in a child's environment. Ask your child to look for print in the environment every week to find new words he or she would like to know.

Writing activities

Writing activities encourage children to share their thoughts and learn about language patterns that can help them to figure out words. Therefore, writing helps reading and reading helps writing. We suggest that as part of your tutoring materials you have a journal for the child and one for yourself to be used for writing activities. We discussed writing about material that is used in the classroom and a supported writing activity with the tutor. These activities can be used during the "Writing Together" time. The following are some more writing ideas that will be helpful for students.

Writing motivated by children's literature

One of the best ways to motivate children to write is by using models provided by children's literature that is read to them or that they read themselves. Here are some activities that include children's literature and writing.

- After reading several books by the same author or illustrator, consider writing a letter to the author discussing his or her style and techniques. Check with the author or illustrator's publisher before you write to find out if the person will answer. Several will and it is worth finding out who, so the child receives a response.

- After reading several books from a series about a single character, encourage the child to write another episode for the character.

- Other books provide the motivation to add personal reflections and additional ideas based on the story. For example, in the story *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972) we find out about a series of unfortunate events that happen to Alexander all in one day. This offers the opportunity for the child you tutor to think about his or her very own bad day and create an episode that tells about a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day that happened to him or her.

- Easy predictable books can provide a plan for the writing. You and the child rewrite the predictable book using the predictable framework by changing key words. You start rewriting the predictable book in this way:

I was walking down the _____

I saw a little _____

I caught it.

I picked it up.

I put it in the cage.

Then, you say, "What are you going to pick up?" The child might suggest a frog and then writes the word in the blank: "I saw a little frog." After the child decides what is going to be picked up, then you generate a rhyming word to go with it that makes sense in the first sentence and write the whole first section on a piece of paper.

Journal writing

There are many types of journals for children to keep, and all of these experiences can be valuable ones.

- **Personal journals** are for children to write about their lives or topics of special interest to them. These are shared only if a child chooses to do so. These are rarely subject to correction for spelling or punctuation.

- **Dialogue journals** are similar to the personal journals, but they are shared with the tutor who responds to what he or she has read. Dialogue journals are like having a conversation only the conversation is written down instead of spoken. The response to what is written provides students with feedback about their thoughts.

- **Reading response journals** are those in which students respond to a text that they have read or has been read to them. Children can write their feelings concerning responses to a story or information. In these response logs a teacher or student can also record new vocabulary learned.

Developing understanding

If the child you are tutoring is having problems with understanding the text, try the following strategies to enhance comprehension development. These suggestions can be used during the "Read Together" segment of the session.

K-W-L

This strategy provides the reader with a tool to guide his or her reading for understanding. **K-W-L** stands for what we **Know**, what we **Want** to know, and what we **Learned**. Use the following procedures to put the technique into practice.

What to do:

1. Children brainstorm what they know about a topic related to a book that is to be read. For example, if the book is about spiders a list of What We **Know** about spiders is created.

2. Children then list questions about What We **Want** to Know as a result of reading the book about spiders.

3. After reading the book, children make a list of What We **Learned** about spiders.

When the text is read, you and child can compare what you already knew before reading, what you learned as a result of reading, and what is still on the list of what you would like to learn because it was not included in the book.

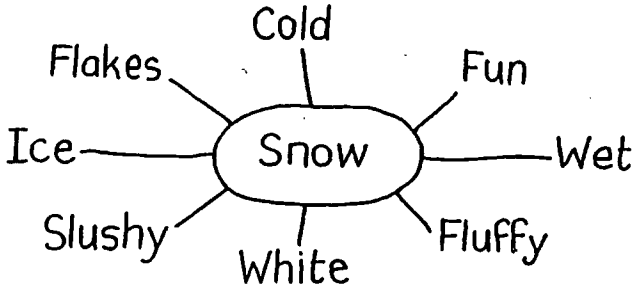
Webbing and mapping

Webbing and mapping are used to categorize and organize information that is read. Webs and maps are diagrams that help students see how words and ideas are related to one another. They are visual representations of the relationships among ideas underlying a concept.

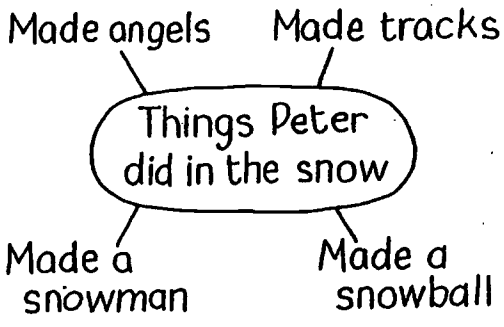
Webs and maps are similar. Webs are drawn using a webbing effect, and maps have boxes and labels that connect in different places. A map is used when making more complex relationships.

When webs and maps are used to develop vocabulary and definitions related to a word, the word is written on a chalkboard or on paper. Children are asked to brainstorm ideas related to the word. For example, after reading *The Snowy Day* (Keats, 1962) the teacher asks the children to provide words that describe what snow is like. The word "snow" is written in the center of the chart or chalkboard and the words given by the children are attached to it. A sample of a web about the word "snow" is shown below. Another web about the same story could generate related things the main character Peter did in the story. This type of web also is shown below.

A Web for Expanding Vocabulary

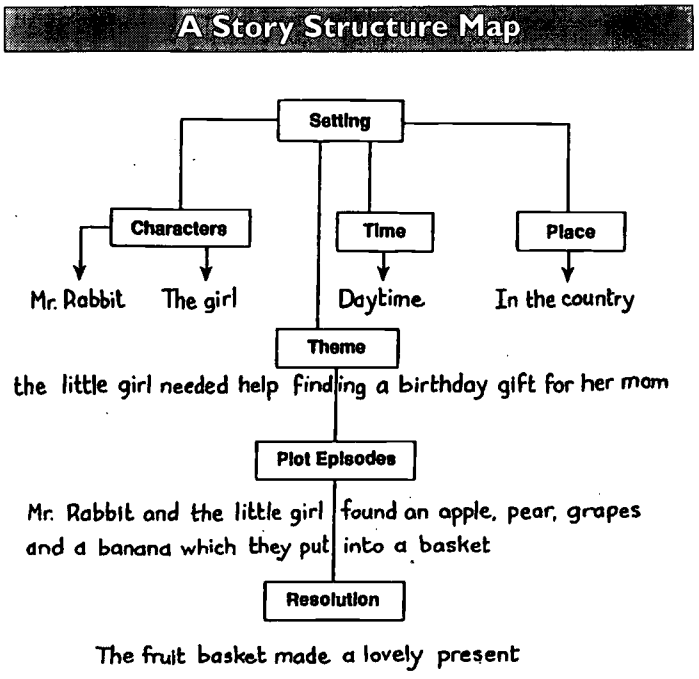


A Web for Expanding Ideas



From Morrow, L.M. (1997). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Reprinted/adapted by permission.

A map provides a different format for graphically presenting materials before and after listening to or reading a book. Maps deal with more complex representations; therefore, boxes for different categories are needed to present the ideas graphically. Story structures can be mapped to help children learn about the structural elements in the text. Sequence of events can be mapped as well, as can studies of individual characters. The story structure map on page 36 is for the story *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* (Zolotow, 1977).



From Morrow, L.M. (1997). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Reprinted/adapted by permission.

Mental imagery and thinkalouds

Mental imagery and thinkalouds can be used with the child you tutor to build comprehension. Mental imagery asks children to visualize what they see after they have been read to or have read a passage themselves.

What to do:

1. Ask the child to close his or her eyes and make a mental picture to help remember and understand what was read.

2. After the mental imagery, ask the child to "thinkaloud" and talk to you about the images.

3. As the child reads, stop at points in the story and ask the child to predict what will happen next in the story based on his or her images.

4. Have the child use the images to check what's happening in the story, to clarify ideas, or to remember forgotten details.

5. Have the child personalize the story by asking if he or she has ever been in a situation similar to the main character in the book, and if so, what did he or she do.

Visualizing ideas and relating those visualizations orally helps clarify information and increase understanding.

Retelling the classroom reading selection

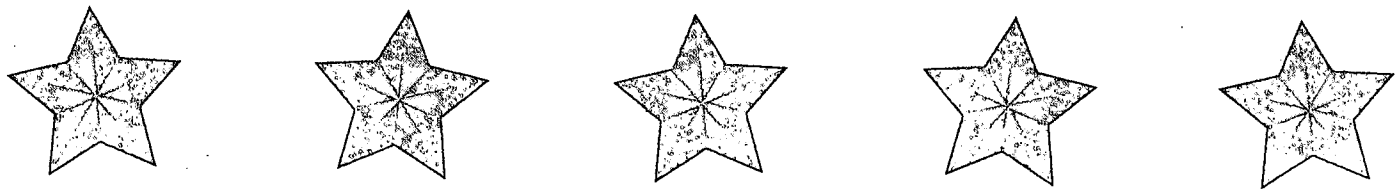
Based on the classroom reading material, the child is asked to retell the selection while you record or write down what is said. This summary (retelling written down) becomes material that is read. Check with the classroom teacher to find out what selection is being studied and obtain a copy of the story, book, or book chapter. Ask the child to retell the classroom selection while you serve as a secretary and write down what the child says. This becomes a written summary. You read the summary together to revise any statements or phrases that are unclear. The summary should follow the natural language patterns of the student. Have the child read the summary several times so that the repetition of the summary will help the student recognize the words in the summary and the words in the classroom story.

Enjoying books together

Provide time for reading for fun. Sit side by side and just enjoy reading together in a comfortable place. Stories can also be retold in many enjoyable ways. For example,

- Prepare a puppet show for a story you've read.
- Draw a picture about your favorite part of a story.
- Do a commercial for your favorite books as if you were on television.

CONCLUSION



We believe the America Reads Challenge can make a significant difference in helping all students become fluent readers by the end of third grade. There is nothing so wonderful and important as having the undivided attention and support of an interested, caring, and willing mentor. Teachers in kindergarten through third grade have on the average approximately 25 students per classroom to teach reading, math, science, social studies, and other subjects. It is almost an impossible task to think that they can meet the individual needs of all children under these circumstances. When we visit a doctor for a particular problem, he or she sees each patient one at a time. The doctor is often a specialist for one particular type of medical problem as well. A teacher is faced with 25 individuals and must teach all subjects at the same time. As a tutor, you can help with this awesome task and can play a significant role in the goal of the America Reads initiative by helping to ensure that all children are able to read well by the end of third grade. You can be proud of the service you are offering to the children in our country and you will be rewarded by their progress and success. For your efforts we thank and applaud you.

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RESOURCES FOR TUTORING

International Reading Association Publications

In the following list of books, there are many ideas that a tutor can use to vary the tutoring session. At the onset of tutoring, following the recommended procedures is essential. As you get to know the routine and your student, you will want ways to enliven your tutoring. These publications can help.

Beyond Storybooks: Young Children and the Shared Book Experience

Judith Pollard Slaughter

This hands-on book provides concrete procedures for shared book experiences and collaborative writing. This follows the format of the lessons suggested for volunteer tutoring. Many teaching ideas are offered to extend shared reading and writing. An annotated bibliography of more than 100 children's books is included.

Tips at Your Fingertips: Teaching Strategies for Adult Literacy Tutors

Ola M. Brown, Editor

This book contains tutoring tips drawn from articles published in the Association's professional periodical *Journal of Reading*. Although this book is targeted for tutors of adults, there are many ideas that apply to tutoring all ages.

The Volunteer Tutor's Toolbox

Beth Ann Herrmann, Editor

This edited book has general guidelines for getting started with tutoring and other tips for tutors. It has six chapters that deal with literacy instruction, helping students with classroom work, and assessment. The ideas are practical suggestions for anyone tutoring children.

Parent Booklets Can Help You Understand Reading

These short booklets offer ideas about reading and writing with young children. Although they are designed for parents, they can certainly help you think about your tutoring.

Creating Readers and Writers

Susan M. Glazer

Beginning Literacy and Your Child

Steven B. Silvern and Linda R. Silvern

Helping Your Child Become a Reader

Nancy L. Roser

These resources may be ordered from the International Reading Association at the following address: Order Department, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA; Phone: 800-336-READ, ext. 266; Fax: 302-731-1057.

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"As a volunteer tutor, you will face many challenges. Personal commitment and a genuine willingness to help will do much to help a child unlock the mysteries of reading. But so will a strategy or two."

From the Foreword by Richard T. Vacca

This handbook is designed to provide volunteer tutors with specific, hands-on information about the tutoring process. You will learn how to motivate your student to get him or her excited about learning to read, how to structure and implement your tutoring sessions, and how to keep records and evaluate your student and yourself.

Sections include:

- **Tutors Are Coaches**
- **Tutors Motivate Success**
- **Planning the Tutoring Session**
- **The Six Elements of the Tutoring Session**
- **Evaluating Your Tutoring**
- **Activities for Tutors**

Joining the team of volunteer tutors is a rewarding experience. The tools and resources in this handbook will help you become a mentor to children who need your help to experience the excitement of reading.

Lesley Mandel Morrow is a Professor of Early Childhood Education and Reading at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA.

Barbara J. Walker is the Chair of the Department of Special Education and Reading at Montana State University-Billings, Billings, Montana, USA.

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