

# Building Readers for Life

## Downingtown Area School District K-5 Literacy Newsletter

Welcome Families!

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year at the Downingtown Area School District! The Elementary Literacy Specialists will be sharing this newsletter within our school community each trimester. Our goal is to communicate important reading strategies and literacy resources to help build successful readers and foster positive home and school connections.

### The Importance of Reading Aloud...

"Research shows that reading aloud is the single most important thing you can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning." [www.readaloud.org](http://www.readaloud.org)

#### Knowledge

Books are a pleasure, yes, and they are also informative. You and your child can learn something new when you read aloud.

#### Brain Development

Babies are born learning. From birth to age 3 are critical years for the development of language skills that are foundational for future learning success. Parents are a child's first and most important teacher.

#### Love of Reading

Parents that read aloud demonstrate that reading is important, that reading is pleasurable, that reading is valued.



#### Bonding

Is there anything better than sharing a good book with a child in your lap!

### Why Read Aloud?

#### Literacy Skills

Vocabulary, Phonics, Familiarity with the printed word, Storytelling, Comprehension.

Reading aloud is invaluable for building literacy skills.

#### Language

The number of words that a child knows when he enters kindergarten is the most important predictor of a child's success or failure. Reading aloud grows your child's vocabulary and introduces many words and concepts that you might not use in everyday conversation.

Acquired from [www.ReadAloud.org](http://www.ReadAloud.org)

### Parent Resources

Check out the following blog from Dr. Timothy Shanahan for some great parent tips for reading aloud with your child:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/blogs/shanahan-literacy/11-ways-parents-can-help-their-children-read>

Parent Toolkit Advice and Dr. Nell Duke "Helping Your Child Build a Strong Vocabulary"

<http://www.parenttoolkit.com/academics/advice/english-language-arts/helping-your-child-build-a-strong-vocabulary>



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### Important Dates:

#### Parent Teacher Conferences

Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>

Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>- Election Day  
No school for students  
K-8 - All day conferences

Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> – Early Dismissal  
No AM/PM K  
K-8 Parent Conferences,  
Evening Conferences

*"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents."  
Emilie Buchwald*



*"Fill your house with stacks of books, in all the crannies and all the nooks." -Dr. Seuss*

## Conversation Strengthens Comprehension

"Conversation is the prime garden in which vocabulary grows..."  
Jim Trelease

One of the most important ways you can build your child's literacy is by having a quick conversation during your reading time together. Conversation time provides opportunities to stretch your child's vocabulary development, make connections with text, and encourages your child to think critically about text. Increasing your child's vocabulary knowledge also strengthens comprehension.

"Related exposure is one of the best ways to master new vocabulary words."  
Nell Duke

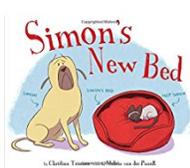
Try this helpful hint for strengthening understanding of new vocabulary:

- 1- Use "kid-friendly" definitions. Ex. *Scrumptious- yummy to eat*
- 2- Use a "kid-friendly" example that fits their life. "Wow, this lunch is *scrumptious!*"
- 3- Have your child create their own example. *Name foods that you find to be scrumptious.*
- 4- Take advantage of opportunities to use the word in daily conversation.

### Looking for Reading Recommendations?

The Keystone State Reading Association provides a list of book titles to classroom teachers and students for their annual Keystone to Reading award nominations. Books are divided by preschool, primary, and intermediate selections. Previous winners for the primary and intermediate grades:

**Primary K-3:** *Simon's New Bed* by Christian Trimmer  
**Intermediate 3-6:** *Tucky Jo and Little Heart* by Patricia Polacco



Check out the 2017-2018 nominees:

[Primary School Book review 2017-2018.pdf](#)

[Intermediate School Book review 2017-2018.pdf](#)

For additional information: Keystone State Reading Association Website

<http://ksrapa.org/awards-of-recognition/awards-for-students/>



## Skill Corner

Try these activities to help your child make connections between the sounds of words and the letters that make those sounds.

**"Talk like a Turtle"**- Choose a word with three or four sounds, such as "mop". Slowly stretch out each sound in the word /m/, /o/, /p/ and have your child listen to each individual sound. Child blends all the sounds and says the whole word. You can even switch roles to play together.

**Sight Word Steps**- In order for a child to read effortlessly, she must learn to read words without stopping to decode them. This is how a child builds a "sight word vocabulary". To build your child's sight word vocabulary, place words on cards that she is familiar with in her oral vocabulary. Start with simple words, such as, I, me, you. Move on to words that have common patterns. Point out each letter and its place in the word. Notice common patterns, e.g., cat and sat both end in -at.

**Writing Center**- Encourage your child to write by setting up a special area with writing tools (pencils, colored pencils, pens, crayons, paper, post-its, cards, scrap paper, journal, diary, etc.). Encourage your child to write by making it part of your daily routine. Write notes to your child and ask him to write you back.

