



## Tips for Parents of Third Graders

Read about it, talk about it, and think about it! Find ways for your child to build understanding, the ultimate goal of learning how to read.

- **Make books special.**

Turn books and reading into something special by taking your kids to the library, helping them get their own library card, reading with them, and buying them books as gifts. Have a favorite place for books in your home, or even better, put books everywhere.

- **Get them to read another one.**

Find ways to encourage your child to keep picking up another book. You could, for example, introduce him or her to a book series like *The Boxcar Children* or *Harry Potter* or to a second book by a favorite author. Ask teachers, librarians, and others for recommendations that match your child's interests and reading level, or look for suggestions on [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org). You could even buy a subscription in your child's name to a magazine that comes regularly in the mail.

- **"Are we there yet?"**

Use the time spent in the car or bus for wordplay. You can talk about how *jam* means something you put on toast as well as cars stuck in traffic. How many other homonyms can your child think of? When kids are highly familiar with the meaning of a word, they have less difficulty reading it.

- **Crack open the dictionary.**

Let your child see you using a dictionary. Say something like, "Hmm, I'm not sure what that word means... I think I'll look it up."

- **First drafts are rough.**

Give your child encouragement when he or she is doing homework or a writing assignment. Remind your child that writing involves several steps like planning, composing an initial draft, revising, and final editing. No one does it perfectly the first time.

- **Different strokes for different folks.**

Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of writing. Stories, for example, are often organized around characters, a setting, and a plot, while nonfiction books are usually organized around main ideas followed by details. Some kids, especially boys, prefer nonfiction books.

- **Talk about what you see and do.**

Talking about everyday activities helps build your child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together; take your child someplace new and talk about what you see; or discuss the movie or television show you've just watched together.

- **Teach your child some "mind tricks."**

You can give your child tips for figuring out the meaning of what he or she reads. Show your child how to summarize a story in a few sentences, for example, or how to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend and remember. After reading a story together, think out loud so your child can see how you summarize and predict. Say something like, "I bet D.W. would have eaten some more if she hadn't known that it was spinach."