

12 TIPS for the Literacy Tutor and Parent

([adapted from this incredible Trout Unlimited article](#))

Last weekend I was reading my monthly Trout Unlimited magazine when I came across an article about teaching kids to fly fish. As I read the article I began to replace the word fishing with reading and the article still made perfect sense. I immediately sat down to adapt the article for our families and tutors. The original article is linked above, if you are interested.

We all want our children and students to love reading. But how do we actually teach that? These 12 tips are a great place to start or come back to. They are time tested in teaching children to fish and I promise, they are just as applicable to literacy. Print them off and hang them at your desk, on your fridge or keep them in a folder to read through whenever you need encouragement on how to make a difference in your child's or student's reading habits.

Make it fun

Reading doesn't have to be a chore. Read in silly voices, act it out, read with friends. Find books that are funny and **laugh while you read**. Looking for a funny picture book? Our Literacy Lab teachers love the book "[Shhh! We have a plan](#)" by Chris Haughton. Come by to check it!



Eliminate Pressure



When reading together, don't focus on the mistakes they are making. Instead, **let them know what they are doing really well**. "Nice, I love the emphasis that you put on that word. It helped me understand the story better." When they don't feel pressured to be perfect, they are much more likely to enjoy the experience.

Stack the deck

Don't be afraid of letting your children or students read a book that is too easy for them or that they already have memorized. **This builds confidence.** I like to call easy readers "vacation books" because they are perfect for time off school. Our picture book library is sorted by reading level. Stop by and work with our staff to find a "vacation" book for your child or student.



Don't limit things to fiction



Often when we think of reading we think of a fiction picture book or chapter book. But, fiction is not everyone's "cup of tea." **Keep the variety** by including magazines, newspapers, online articles, non-fiction books, plays, etc. Find what kind of reading they do like and watch the pages turn! Our TLC library has a theme section full of books, magazines, poetry and more.

Be a part of the process

Read with them! I know that is easier said than done, but try and find a few minutes every week where you sit down and read together. Maybe they read to you or you read to them, but the fact that you are **spending time with them reading** will show them how important it really is.



Accept that interests change



Your student or child may have loved picture books when they were younger but now they think those stories are silly. They would rather know what their friends are doing on Instagram than pick up a book. **Go with it** as the interests change. Allow your children to read articles online like on [national geographic](#), [powder magazine](#) or [local news](#).

Instill practice and patience

There is a reason teachers say read every day for 20 minutes. **Practicing makes it easier and more enjoyable to read.** Create a comfy spot at home that is only for reading. When your children curl up there with their book, they know they can relax and just read.



Lead by example



Our children and students are always watching us to see what we are doing and how we are handling things. When they see the adults in their life that they respect and care about reading, they are **more likely to want to pick up a book too.** We love to read and are happy to chat about great adult titles to pick up at the local library.

Make it “theirs”

Give your children or student books that are theirs, let them read under the table, outside or with their feet up on the wall. **Let them choose what books they check out** from the library or pick out at the book store. This allows students to take ownership of their reading.

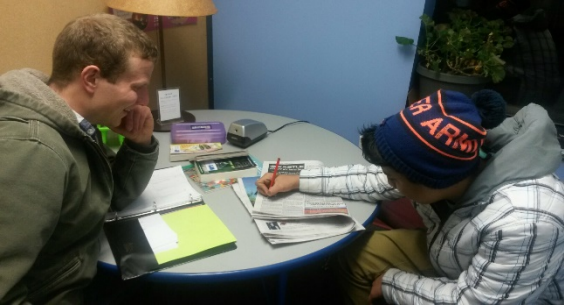


Make reading more than just reading



Does your family like to go camping? Bring books. Reading doesn't have to just be about reading. Maybe it is really about listening to stories around the campfire. Maybe reading is really about learning how to make slime or build a race car. When reading is about something bigger, **it becomes easier to pick up that book.**

Know your student



What gets them excited? What do they already know? What strategies has their teacher already taught them? The more we know our students the more we can individualize the type of instruction that we give them. **Give them opportunities to show you what they do really well** and be ready to support them in areas where you know they struggle.

Ask them questions

Our children and students know more than they think they do. As you are reading with them ask lots of questions, even ask a question in response to one of theirs. “Why do you think the character acted that way?” “How should you attack that difficult word?” “What strategies do you know for when you don’t understand what that paragraph is talking about?” Then, when they are on their own, **they will start asking themselves questions** and won’t be looking to you for all the answers.



Want to know the best part? These 12 tips also work for writing!