

# VIRGINIA READS

Parents, children, and teachers working together can achieve Virginia's goal: all children reading on grade level.



*A Message from the Superintendent  
of Public Instruction*

The ability of children to read on grade level is essential for their success in school and in life. Reading is the most valuable tool adults give to children as they grow, progress, and build the foundation for lifelong learning. Schools and families have a shared responsibility to provide effective instructional techniques, and a nurturing, print-rich environment to help children become avid readers.

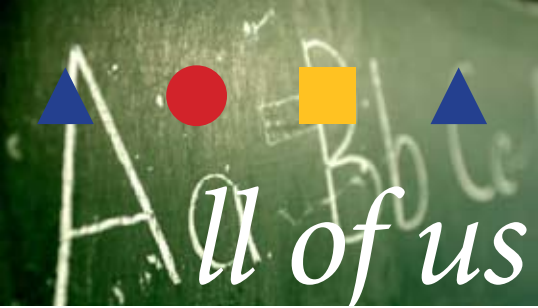
With this goal in mind, the Virginia Department of Education produced this brochure, Virginia Reads. The brochure highlights the *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds* and the Virginia English Standards of Learning for kindergarten through the fifth grade, and provides suggestions for ways parents can assist children in achieving these standards. Suggestions are research-based, and will enhance children's opportunities to become skilled readers.

I urge you to take an active role in your children's education. Working together, we can ensure the reading success of Virginia's children.



*Patricia I. Wright*

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Superintendent of Public Instruction



*want children to feel competent with the printed page and eager to discover new information. In school, we are making outstanding strides to insure reading success for all children.*

*At home, parents and caregivers are a vital link in support of these literary efforts. Parents serve as reading and writing role models as children observe them reading and writing daily.*

*This brochure provides tips for parents to use at home as well as brief statements about English expectations at each grade level. We all must act now; to help children grasp the opportunity to become good readers and experience the success reading brings.*



## TOP TEN TIPS FOR PARENTS

An excerpt from: *Every Child Reading: An Action Plan Written* by Learning First Alliance, an organization of 18 leading national education associations.



### *1. Start at the beginning.*

Setting the foundation for reading success is necessary before your child begins first grade, and will be crucial to academic achievement in a variety of subjects. Research shows that reading to children as early as infancy can give them a strong base for language concepts and cognitive skills related to print. Introduce your children to colorful stories and picture books to foster a love of reading. Establish a routine; reading stories at bedtime is a cozy way to promote literacy. Make it interactive. Have children help turn pages and encourage them to discuss the story's plot and characters.

### *2. Explore your neighborhood library together.*

Take your children to the local library and introduce them to the wide selection of books, newspapers, magazines, and story telling programs that they have to offer. Also, do not forget that your library's computer provides the perfect opportunity to introduce your children to the Internet. Go online with them and show them how to do research for school projects and papers.

### *3. Volunteer at your child's school.*

Studies show that parent involvement is correlated with reading achievement. Given adequate training, parents can help in the classroom by volunteering to serve as tutors in the school. Support the school's literacy efforts and advocate for effective instructional materials and modern technology, including computers and access to the Internet, so that all children have excellent learning opportunities. Work through a parent organization, like the PTA, to develop and build strong relationships between parents and educators. Discuss ways that reading performance can be reinforced in the home.





#### ***4. Write it out.***

Writing gives children opportunities to use their reading competence. Support your children's creative and expository writing efforts and encourage them to keep a journal or diary so they can practice at home.

#### ***5. Enroll your children in afterschool, childcare, or summer programs that cultivate and reinforce reading skills.***

If your school does not offer these types of programs, urge the school's administrators and the school board to provide them.

#### ***6. Be a 'study buddy.'***

You can help your child organize information, look for key ideas in books, and practice reading out loud. Point out everyday tasks like interpreting instructions, recipes, and road signs, that require solid reading skills. Be sure to have plenty of interesting reading materials at home such as books, magazines, and newspapers to encourage your child to read more frequently. Practice makes perfect.

#### ***7. Ask for help.***

If your child is having difficulty with reading, speak with your child's educator about having the problem addressed.

#### ***8. Support school reform.***

Advocate at the local, state, and national level for school reform efforts, like class size, teacher training, and parent involvement, which are proven to make a difference in early reading performance and other subjects.

#### ***9. Start the day off right.***

Make sure your children are well rested, organized, and have a nutritious breakfast every day so they arrive at school ready to learn.

#### ***10. Rhyme to reason.***

Giving children experiences with rhyming is an effective way to build phonemic awareness and requires children to focus on the sounds inside words.







*The following information provides a broad view of some of the behaviors indicated in Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds and the Standards of Learning. You might see these behaviors as children develop English skills. The section headed "How you can help..." is designed to offer a few suggested activities for parents.*

### ***Four-year-olds should...***

- ▲ Listen with increasing attention to spoken language, conversations, and stories read aloud.
- Use new vocabulary with increasing frequency to express and describe feelings and ideas.
- Discriminate similarities and differences in sounds (environmental sounds and letter sounds).
- ▲ Distinguish print from pictures.
- Demonstrate directionality of reading left to right on a page.
- Notice letters around him/her in familiar everyday life.

### ***How you can help...***

- ▲ Engage your children in conversation throughout your daily routine.
- Read books and stories aloud to your children daily.
- Provide your children with a variety of print materials, i.e., magazines, logos, and signs.
- ▲ Play rhyming word games.
- Provide your children opportunities to write using unlined paper and a variety of writing materials (colored pencils, crayons, and markers).
- Use magnetic letters and children's names to assist in letter knowledge and word recognition.





### *Kindergartners should...*

- ▲ Enjoy reading poems, rhymes, songs, and stories with their teacher and fellow classmates.
- Recognize and name the uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet.
- Understand letters represent sounds, and identify the sounds.
- ▲ Relate stories through drama, retellings, drawing, and their own writing.
- Recognize rhyming words.
- Write their first and last names.

### *How you can help...*

- ▲ Talk with your children, engage them in conversation, and show interest in what your children say.
- Read and reread stories that rhyme and have predictable texts (books in which words or phrases are consistently repeated).
- Visit the library regularly.
- ▲ Have your children separate sounds in words by listening for beginning and ending sounds, and by putting separate sounds together.
- Make a set of flash cards with the uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet – have your children tell you the letter name and what sound the letter makes. Some letters have more than one sound; thus, you may want to ask the school for help with the letter sounds.
- Have your children print their first and last name.





## *First Graders should...*

- ▲ Expand their listening and speaking vocabularies.
- Tell and retell stories and events in order.
- Use their knowledge of letter sounds to decode (unlock) new words.
- ▲ Increase their sight word vocabulary.
- Read and comprehend fiction and nonfiction selections.
- Write simple sentences.
- ▲ Print legibly.
- Alphabetize words according to the first letter.



## *How you can help...*

- Read to your children and have them read familiar books to you.
- ▲ Establish a specific time for reading every night, perhaps just before bed.
- Have your children predict what they think the story will be about before reading and after reading have them retell the story.
- Encourage your children's attempts at reading and writing.
- ▲ Visit the library and have your children sign up for their own library card.
- Encourage your child to use vocabulary words (ask teacher for a list) throughout the day and model using the words yourself.
- Write five words and have your children put them in ABC order.







## *Second Graders should...*

- ▲ Expand their listening and speaking vocabularies.
- Read nonfiction, poetry, and chapter books.
- Use their knowledge of letter sounds to decode (unlock) new words.
- ▲ Use information gained from pictures, titles, diagrams, etc., to increase their comprehension.
- Answer simple who, what, when, where, why, and how questions after reading.
- Create stories that have a beginning, middle, and end.
- ▲ List and organize ideas before writing and revise after writing.
- Edit writing for punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- Use table of contents.
- ▲ Alphabetize words, using first, second, and third letter.

## *How you can help...*

- Have a specific time set aside for reading every night.
- Have your children predict what they think the story will be about before reading and after reading ask simple questions about what they have read.



- ▲ After your children have read a page, point out words they have missed and help them read the words correctly.
- Ask your children to write a definition for their vocabulary words (ask teacher for list) using their own language.
- Write eight to ten words and have your children put them in alphabetic order.
- ▲ Ask your children to use the table of contents to look up information.
- Write one or two sentences and have your children edit them (include some mistakes to improve their proofreading skills).

### *Third Graders should...*

- ▲ Present brief oral reports.
- Set a purpose for reading.
- Make connections between previous experiences and reading selections.
- ▲ Decode words to read and spell correctly.
- Make, confirm, or revise predictions.
- Compare and contrast characters in stories.
- ▲ Identify characteristics of biographies and autobiographies.
- Write descriptive paragraphs.
- Write stories, letters, explanations, and short reports.
- ▲ Write legibly in cursive.
- Locate information in dictionaries and encyclopedias.



### *How you can help...*

- Have your children predict what they think a story will be about before they begin to read. Check the prediction after reading, was it reasonable?
- ▲ Ask your children to summarize a story they have read.
- Give your children a list of words with prefixes and suffixes and have them tell you the root or base word. (Example: recount=count, preheat=heat, reasonable=reason, and newly=new)
- Ask your children to write a paragraph describing a person, place, or thing (without naming it). Read the paragraph and see if you can guess what they are describing.
- ▲ Write a paragraph and have your children edit it (include some mistakes to improve their proofreading skills).



## *Fourth Graders should...*

- ▲ Organize information to make class presentations and reports.
- Determine meanings of unfamiliar words by using context and reference materials.
- Use before-, during-, and after-reading strategies to increase comprehension.
- ▲ Explain the author's purpose after reading.
- Identify and explain elements of literature in biographies and historical fiction.
- Write stories and explanations.
- ▲ Describe the rhyme pattern and identify the sensory words used when reading poetry.
- Revise and edit writing for subject-verb agreement, proper use of the pronoun "I", and avoiding double negatives.
- Use reference resources to research a topic.
- ▲ Use a glossary, dictionary, and thesaurus.



## *How you can help...*

- Ask your children to write some questions that could be answered after they have read a selection.
- Have your children write a short summary of a book they have read.
- ▲ Read several paragraphs your children have written to see if you can offer suggestions for improving style, word choice, or sentence variation.
- Write a paragraph and have your children edit it (include some mistakes to improve their proofreading skills).
- Continue the practice of giving your children words with prefixes and suffixes and having them tell you the root or base word. (Examples: untie=tie, disagree=agree, delightful=delight, and joyous=joy)





### *Fifth Graders should...*

- ▲ Increase oral presentation skills with appropriate body language, correct posture, and eye contact.
- Prepare visual aids to support oral presentations.
- Read critically to examine implied relationships and understandings.
- ▲ Continue building vocabulary independence by using word-reference materials and the context of the passage to determine the meaning of the word.
- Use text organizers such as headings and graphics to aid in the understanding of nonfiction texts.
- Read poetry to determine rhyme pattern and the use of figurative language.
- ▲ Write to describe, to inform, to entertain and to explain.
- Revise and edit writing, especially focusing on the proper use of possessives and quotation marks.
- Expand their use of reference sources to locate information.



### *How you can help...*

- ▲ Listen to your children practice their oral presentation and offer two or three suggestions for improvement.
- Have your children keep a log of the books they have read. Regularly review and discuss these books. Encourage reading at every opportunity.
- Provide nonfiction books on topics of interest (such as airplanes, animals, or history) by going to the library regularly.
- ▲ Talk about books together focusing on writers purpose, meanings that are not directly stated, and cause-and-effect relationships.
- Read several paragraphs your children have written to see if you can offer suggestions for improving style, word choice, or sentence variation.



For additional information visit our Web site at:

*[www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov)*

or call:

*The Office of Early Childhood Development at (804) 225-2877*

or

*The Office of Elementary Instructional Services at (804) 225-2063*

or

*The Office of Special Education and Student Services at (804) 225-2932*



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