



Developing Reading Comprehension from Home



Laurie Elish-Piper is a professor and Reading Clinic director at Northern Illinois University. She states, **“Parents play a key role in their children’s literacy development and school success.”** Elish-Piper was first an elementary and middle school teacher and educational therapist and in the article titled *Understanding Reading Comprehension: Information and Ideas for Parents about Reading Comprehension*, she offers ten practical suggestions for parents to use to help their children.

1. Read to and with your child on a daily basis. Set at least a 15 minute daily reading goal for each of you and encourage your child to read a variety of texts.
2. When reading something with your child, discuss what happened afterwards. Ask questions like, “What happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story?” If your child cannot recall something, model how to go back to the text and find the answers.
3. Help your child identify the main character or main idea of a story by asking, “Who/what is this about? How do you know?”
4. Similarly, help your child identify the setting of a story by asking, “Where and when does this story take place? How do you know?”
5. Check your child’s understanding of a story’s plot by asking, “Somebody, wanted, but, so”. Who is the “somebody”? What did he or she “want”? “But” what problem did they face? “So” how did they solve the problem?
6. Ask your child to make personal connections to what they are reading. Examples may include, “How would you feel if this happened to you? Does this remind you of another story or personal experience?”
7. Ask your child to periodically make predictions about what will happen next in a story. Challenge them to read and find out if his or her prediction was correct.
8. Ask your child to preview what he or she is reading by looking over book covers, titles, headings, bold words, and charts or graphs.
9. Invite your child to “be the teacher” by teaching you or other family members key ideas from a text.
10. Ask your child to rate a book on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Discuss books you each enjoy, as well as books you do not enjoy. This can help you find other high-interest books for your child in the future.

Elish-Piper, Laurie. "Understanding Reading Comprehension: Information And Ideas For Parents About Reading Comprehension." *Illinois Reading Council Journal* 38.3 (2010): 49-52.