

Growing a Reader:

Stepping Up to Chapter Books

For your child, aged 4–8

Over 50
recommended books
for beginning readers,
tips for parents
and more!



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Growing a Reader



Continue to read aloud

Listening to the written word supports language development by teaching new words and building a love of reading. Children can usually understand content in books that they aren't able to read themselves, so by reading them aloud, you can increase their comprehension skills.

Not every word counts

All readers make substitutions as they read and it's fine as long as the meaning of the word doesn't change. For example: if your child reads "house" instead of "home," keep reading without comment. However, if your child says "horse" instead of "house", the meaning has changed and you should ask them if

that makes sense. Let them discover the substitution and the correct word. Reassure your child that this is a normal experience that shows they are becoming a more skilled reader!

Encourage your child to select their own reading material

In school, children are directed to books with educational goals. It's important to supplement their reading material at home and at the library with items that interest them and that they choose for themselves. This includes books that they can read on their own and books that need to be read to them. Letting your child select their own books helps to foster a joy of reading that will last a lifetime.



Learning to read is a gradual process that you can support in many ways as your child grows.

In the early stages of literacy, children learn that print and pictures in books have meaning. They like having the same book read to them over and over, and may eventually start to “read” the familiar text out loud. You should read, sing, talk, play and write with your child at this stage because these everyday activities develop early literacy skills.

When your child starts school, they will be given formal instruction about reading and writing. However, you still play an important role in their reading development and can support them in the following ways.

Model that reading is important

When your child sees you reading (it doesn't matter what), it reinforces that reading is an important activity that continues throughout one's life.

Reading is reading, no matter what the format

Comic books, instruction manuals, audiobooks, eBooks, novels, picture books, magazines, cereal boxes – all of these formats support reading development and promote a literate life.

Reading is cyclical

Just as your younger child longed for the same book night after night, older readers often return to familiar books that they find comforting. As long as they continue to be challenged with some new books, reading familiar books should be encouraged as it boosts reading enjoyment.

Books for Beginning Readers



Beginning Readers (BR)

For ages 6–7; grades 1–2

Easy, controlled vocabulary, repetitive words, rhyme, shorter sentences and a clearly defined format

Large, widely spaced print, lots of white space and many illustrations

May be categorized by reading level, which varies by publisher

Series and recurring characters are very popular

Easy to Read (ER)

For ages 7–8+; grades 2–3


Some controlled vocabulary, less word repetition, longer sentences and more pages than BRs

Many illustrations (generally in black and white), larger print and more white space than fiction for older children

Not usually categorized by reading level

Series and recurring characters continue to be popular

Ballet Cat

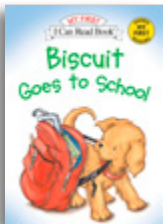
Bob Shea, 2015 



Ballet Cat loves to twirl, leap, and spin. Join her as she learns to deal with secrets, a fear of underpants, and winning grandma's affection.

Biscuit

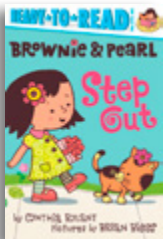
Alyssa Satin Capucilli, 1996   



Read along with Biscuit, everyone's favourite yellow puppy, who finds himself in adorable yet mischievous situations. Fans of his board books can graduate to this delightful BR series.

Brownie & Pearl

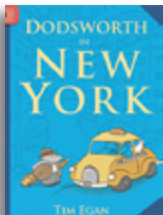
Cynthia Rylant, 2010 



Brownie and her cat, Pearl, love exploring the world around them. In vibrant and bold colours, this book is a wonderful introduction to small words for emerging readers.

Dodsworth

Tim Egan, 2007



Take an adventure with Dodsworth and his quirky traveling companion, Duck. This humorous series introduces readers to Paris, London, New York, Rome and Tokyo.


Jon Scieszka's Trucktown

Jon Scieszka, 2014 



Strap in for a high-octane, high-energy adventure as Jack Truck and Dump Truck Dan hit the road. Have fun in Trucktown by making noise and getting dirty.

Ling & Ting

Grace Lin, 2010 



Twin sisters, Ling and Ting, try to convince everyone of their differences while on a series of fun adventures, performing magic tricks, making dumplings and visiting the library.

Murilla Gorilla

Jennifer Lloyd, 2013 



For readers with a sense of humour and who enjoy a light-hearted mystery. Filled with colourful illustrations and simple text, this is sure to appeal to newly independent readers.

Notebook of Doom

Troy Cummings, 2013 



This is a high interest, easy to read series accompanied by fun illustrations. Each book follows Alexander and his friends as they encounter mysteries, mayhem and monsters!

Positive Power

Suzy Capozzi, 2017



Positive Power is an easy to read series full of positive statements for children and their parents. The power of this series encourages families to adapt affirmations to daily living.

Snail & Worm, 2016

Tina Kügler, 2016



When Worm meets Snail, a delightful friendship is born. Follow the two friends as they support one another on their funny adventures.

Splat the Cat

Rob Scotton & various authors, 2011



Splat is one of the most expressive cats around and you will find that you can't help but make silly faces while you read his stories.

You Read to Me, I'll Read to You, 2001

Mary Ann Hoberman



In this series, the text is divided into three columns to encourage readers to read together. Stories include tall tales, fables, nursery rhymes, scary stories and more.

Beginning Readers: Non-Fiction Series

Disgusting Critters (Les Petits Dégoûtants)

Elise Gravel, 2013



Factual and funny at the same time, these non-fiction titles depict commonly reviled creatures. They offer trivia and the opportunity for kids to expand their

vocabulary of the grotesque.

Kingfisher Readers

Various authors, 2012



This exciting series encourages beginner and young readers to learn with fun facts and engaging photography.

National Geographic Readers

Various authors, 2011



This non-fiction informational reading series is for curious kids who want to learn about a variety of topics, from sharks, to trucks, to Albert Einstein, and so much more.

You Should Meet

Various authors, 2017



In this non-fiction biography series, readers will get to meet historical figures who've achieved great things!

Jonathan Fenske



Jonathan Fenske's books are full of action and pair bold illustrations with playful text. Kids will crack up while reading these stories, filled with shenanigans and silliness!

Guppy Up, 2013

A Pig, A Fox, and Stinky Socks, 2017

Andy Griffiths



Andy Griffiths is a master of rhyme and comedy and his engaging illustrations will keep readers excited and craving more.

The Big Fat Cow That Goes Kapow, 2009

The Cat on the Mat is Flat, 2009

Candice Ransom

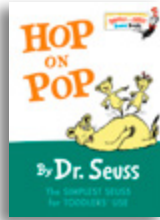


Candice Ransom explores childhood experiences, using rhythmic text and picture clues to help beginner readers decode her delightful stories.

Apple Picking Day! 2016

Tooth Fairy's Night, 2017

Dr. Seuss



Funny characters, entertaining rhymes, and outlandish illustrations are found throughout Dr. Seuss's books. Emerging readers will love this fresh and humorous

collection that will capture their imagination.

Hop on Pop, 1991

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, 1988

Jan Thomas



Follow the silly adventures of the Giggle Gang in these hilarious titles. Great for readers who enjoy Mo Willems' Elephant and Piggie series.

My Friends Make Me Happy, 2018

What is Chasing Duck?, 2017

Mo Willems



Eccentric, heartwarming, and hilarious, Willems' stories teach about friendship, sharing, and responsibility while drawing readers into the worlds of characters like Cat the Cat, and Elephant and Piggie.

Cat the Cat Who is That? 2010

Time to Sleep Sheep the Sheep! 2010

Finding a “Just Right” Book



Open a book to any page, ask your child to start reading aloud, and look for these clues:

Word Recognition	1 – 2 words they don't know	3 – 4 words they don't know	5+ words they don't know
Fluency	Reads smoothly	Mostly smooth reading, stumbling over a word or two	Reading sounds choppy and takes a long time
Understanding	Can easily summarize what they read in their own words	Have a good understanding of what they read	Don't understand what they read
The book could be...	Too Easy Books that are easy for your child to read are ideal for <u>boosting their confidence</u> and reading enjoyment.	Just Right Just right books are great for building your child's reading skills. You can help your child use <u>reading strategies</u> to decode words and make sense of what they're reading.	Too Hard Books that are difficult for your child to read on their own can be <u>read aloud</u> by you (or with help from you), or saved until your child is older.

How do you help your child choose a book that's "just right" for them to read on their own?

There's no such thing as a "wrong" book...



Decoding Words

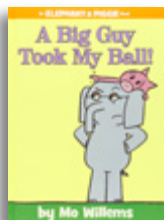
Is your child stuck on a word that they can't figure out? Help them to decode it by asking them to:

- Look at the picture for something that begins with that letter.
- Say the beginning sound.
- Slowly stretch each letter sound to make the word.
- Break the word into chunks they already know.
- Re-read the sentence. Think, "does that make sense?"
- Try a word that makes sense.
- Skip the tricky word. Read to the end of the sentence. Go back and try it again.
- If they're still stuck, they can ask you for help!

Beginning Readers: Series in French & English

Elephant & Piggie (Éléphant et Rosie)

Mo Willems, 2007



This lovable duo are total opposites – Gerald is cautious while Piggie seeks excitement. Despite their differences, they weather many hilarious mishaps, proving the enduring nature of true friendship.

Fly Guy (Zig Zag)

Tedd Arnold, 2005



Fly Guy and his best friend, a boy named Buzz, share many funny adventures in this playful, cartoon-style series for emerging readers.

Lotus Lane (Chemin du Lotus)

Kyla May, 2013



Best friends Kiki, Lulu and Coco have their own club. The new girl, Mika, has come to shake things up. Lotus Lane contains fun illustrations that replicate each girl's

diary.

Pete the Cat (Pat le Chat)

James Dean, 2003



Pete the Cat is one groovy feline with an adventurous soul. Fans of his picture books can graduate to this fun-filled beginner reader series.

Dial-a-Story

Kids and their families can listen to a story by phone any time. Available in 16 languages for kids 12 and under.

Call 416-395-5400
to listen to a story
for free.



Drôle de Boulot

Louise Tondreau-Lever, 2017 🇨🇦



Both informative and amusing, these beginner readers introduce various careers that kids might be interested in, like firefighting!

Hercule Carotte

Pascal Brissy, 2013



Detective Hercule Carotte and his faithful companion, Eusebius Télégraf, are on the case...and they need your help!

La Tour Eiffel

Mymi Doinet, 2016



The Eiffel Tower has caught the travel bug! Follow her adventures as she travels around her hometown of Paris, then explores Egypt and Italy.

Lire, C'est Facile

Various Authors, Beginner Reader Series, 2015-2017



The three-part format of these books is ideal for reluctant readers. First, games to help build confidence, then a story to read, and lastly, a nursery rhyme to sing and relax with!

Lis Avec Caillou

Various Authors, 2017



Fans of the Caillou picture books and TV series can continue following his adventures with these readers.

Moi, Je Lis Tout Seul

Clemence Masteau, 2015



Follow the adventures of Oscar, Salomé and their grade one class in this brightly illustrated collection. Books include comprehension games created by an elementary school teacher.

Design a “Reading” Home



Read, read, and read some more

Children need all kinds of interesting books and materials to read, not only in print, but also in audio and online. Families can build a home “library” and use the public library’s huge selection of books, audiobooks, ebooks and magazines for kids, in English and other languages, to support reading development.

Comfy reading space

Children need a comfortable place to read. This can be anywhere – a bed, chair, couch, or nook – as long as it is relaxed and invites page

Play games

Board game night is a favourite for many families and promotes literacy at the same time. Board, card and word games (Boggle, Pictionary and Scrabble) are fun and improve reading, problem-solving and social skills.

Talk (and don’t forget to listen)

Ask specific, open-ended questions, (not questions that can be answered with yes or no), and make sure you’re talking with, and not just to, your child. Chat about your day and ask about theirs, make time to really think about their questions and find answers together, and ask for their opinion.





Does your home offer lots of ways for your child to read, write, talk and play?

Literacy-rich environments present chances to use these skills and emphasize the importance of reading and writing every day. Making your home a “reading” home isn’t difficult or expensive. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Be dramatic

Spark creativity and imagination by reading stories, poems and plays aloud, playing charades, telling stories and reminiscing about memorable family moments. Looking through a photo album is a great way to find inspiration!

Write

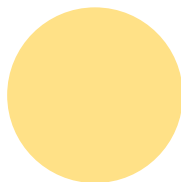
Encourage writing by keeping pencils, markers, paper and other writing tools out in the open, and invite your child to write lists, songs, poetry, stories, letters and email or keep a diary. Write to each other and leave notes for your child in unexpected places for them to discover.

Make it mobile

Literacy-rich environments can go anywhere! Always bring books, word searches, a deck of cards and pen and paper with you – all of which fit nicely in a backpack or the car.

It’s more than just tools

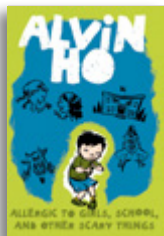
Literacy-rich environments need books and tools to promote a love of reading, but they also need people to bring them to life. A home filled with readers encourages questions, game playing, listening to stories, reading books and making time for each other.



Easy to Read: Series

Alvin Ho

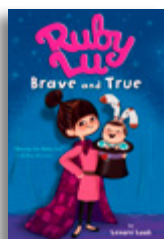
Lenore Look, 2008 ☐



Second Grader Alvin Ho is the boy equivalent of Melanie Watt's Scaredy Squirrel. Alvin explores different personas to face his fears and make sense of school, friends and family life.

Ruby Lu

Lenore Look, 2004



Ruby Lu will steal the hearts of readers with her energy and sass. Through this series, readers will learn about Chinese and Chinese-American culture through family, food and daily life.

And Then It Happened

Michael Wade, 2003 ☒



It's probably no coincidence that there are thirteen books in this Canadian series, which details the hilarious adventures of three best friends through a series of short stories.

The Bad Guys

Aaron Blabey, 2016 ☐



Mr. Wolf, Mr. Piranha, Mr. Snake and Mr. Shark try to shed their stereotypical characteristics and do some good. Expect hijinks! These hilarious stories are a primer on contradicting one's nature.

Billy and the Mini Monsters

Zanna Davidson, 2017



Billy's life changed forever when he found the mini monsters in his sock drawer. Engaging storytelling with colourful illustrations and snappy dialogue will capture even the most reluctant of readers!

Dragonbreath

Ursula Vernon, 2009 ☐



After being told to rewrite his essay, the young dragon, Danny Dragonbreath, travels to the ocean encountering both mermen and dangerous vampire squids in an attempt to improve his grade.

Easy-to-Read Wonder Tales

Veronika Martenova Charles, 2010



Three friends share diverse, bite-size fairytales and folktales. Read about Jack and the Beanstalk from Appalachia, Norway and Scotland, and Snow White from Greece, Armenia, Italy,

and more!

Hilde Cracks the Case

Hilde Lysiak, 2017



Nine-year-old crime reporter, Hilde Lysiak, stars in this fast-paced mystery series. Inspired by real life news stories, Hilde's reporting skills are put to the test.

Magical Animal Adoption Agency, 2015

Kallie George, 2015 🍁 📖



Root for Clover as her luck changes at a pet adoption agency that is out of this world. From unicorns to a witch, explore this tale of magic and adventure.

Nikki and Deja

Karen English, 2007 📖



Nikki and Deja are neighbours and best of friends. This warm series explores the trials and tribulations of elementary school life, especially cliques among friends.

Princess in Black

Shannon Hale, 2014 📖



Princess Magnolia has a secret! When her monster alarm rings she turns into The Princess in Black. Warning: this series contains major girl power!

Super Happy Party Bears

Marcie Colleen, 2016



The Super Happy Party Bears love to eat doughnuts, dance, and have fun! Read all about their adventures as they try to make the animals of Grumpy Woods super happy.

West Meadow Detectives

Liam O'Donnell, 2015 🍁

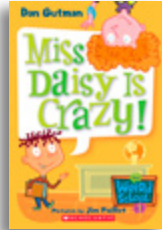


Myron is on the autism spectrum, which gives him a unique perspective and top-notch sleuthing skills. He partners with Hajrah and Danielle in his resource room to solve

epic mysteries.

My Weird School, My Weirder School, My Weirdest School

Dan Gutman, 2004 📖 📖



Wisecracking A.J. and his classmates attend Ella Mentry School, where the teachers are wacky, every day is zany, and the laughs never stop!



The Power of Reading Aloud



Jim Trelease, author of *The Read Aloud Handbook*, says one of the reasons to keep reading aloud to children is that their listening level is higher than their reading level. Sharing stories with more complicated plots and characters improves comprehension and motivates children to read more.

Looking for ways to have a great read aloud experience with your child?

Let your child pick the book

They can choose a title on their own, or you can pick out a few books, read the summaries and let them have the final say.

Expression matters

Not only does reading with expression make a story jump off the page, but it also helps young readers to become more confident. Change the volume and sound of your voice to mirror characters or plot (think loud, deep voice when reading the

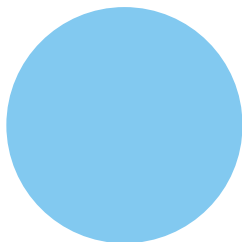
part of an ogre), adapt the tone based on punctuation and font style (such as, “you did WHAT?!?”) and slow or quicken the pace to create suspense or a feeling of adventure.

Talk about the books you read together

Find a time when it’s convenient – this could be at dinner, traveling to and from school, or right before bed. Ask your child what they did or didn’t like about the book and invite them to ask you questions, too.



New readers find it very exciting to read without help! But after children know how to read well, it's still important for more experienced readers to read aloud to them. Why?





Make them want more

Stories come alive when they're read aloud. End on a chapter that's exciting so they can't wait to find out what happens next. The time you spend reading and talking together (and maybe even laughing or crying, depending on the book) is one of the things that kids want most.



Easy to Read: Series in English & French

Bad Kitty (Méchant Minou)

Nick Bruel, 2007  



Kitty is a housecat with a bad temper, terrorizing her owner, Uncle Murray, and the family's new puppy. Kids will love her feistiness and the fun facts in every book.

Bink and Gollie (Bink et Gollie)

Kate DiCamillo, 2010  



Best friends, Bink and Gollie, are very different, but their adventures prove that opposites attract in this award winning series.

Dragon Masters (Maîtres des dragons)

Tracey West, 2014 



Drake has been chosen to train as a Dragon Master with Ana, Rori and Bo. This is an exciting series with a diverse cast of children, and lessons in empathy for readers.

Olive & Beatrix (Olive et Béatrix)

Amy Marie Stadelmann, 2017 



Olive and Beatrix are twins who do not get along. Olive is a science and nature loving girl and Beatrix is a witch with powers who likes playing tricks.

Ottoline (Apolline)

Chris Riddell, 2007 



While her parents travel the world collecting interesting things, Ottoline solves tricky problems and mysteries with her friend Mr. Munroe. A beautifully illustrated series, full of wonder and curiosities.


Rainbow Fairies (L'Arc en Ciel Magique)

Daisy Meadows, 2003 



Kirsty Tate and Rachel Walker go on adventures with rainbow fairies. With over 200 titles to choose from, avid readers will not run out of books to dive into.


Captain Underpants (Capitaine Bobette)

Dav Pilkey, 1997 



Born when George and Harold accidentally hypnotize their principal into becoming a superhero they invented, the only thing wackier and more hilarious than Captain Underpants is his origin story!

Ricky Ricotta's Mighty Robot (Ricky Ricotta et Son Robot Géant)

Dav Pilkey, 2000 



When alien supervillains invade, Earth's only hope is a mouse and his mighty, two-and-a-half-foot tall robot, in this graphic book series.

2 Amies Pour La Vie!

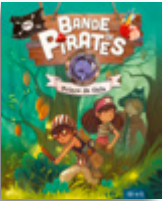
Anne-Marie Pol, 2015



Cléo never had a best friend before she met Chloé, but now the two are inseparable. Read about all of the ups and downs that these two friends face together.

Bande de Pirates

Olivier Dupin, 2017



The tales of three apprentice pirates and their parrot. For kids who like tales of sunken ships, forgotten treasure and far-away adventures.

Billy Stuart

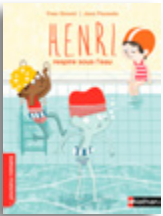
Alain M. Bergeron, 2011



When Billy and his friends discover a way to travel back in time, their lives becomes more thrilling than they could have ever imagined.

H.E.N.R.I.

Yves Grevet, 2015



other classmates.

Manon's new, mysterious friend has incredible talents. Henri confides in Manon about his strange abilities and she is put in the tricky position of hiding his secrets from

Jean Petit Marmiton

Annie Jay, 2017



Journey to eighteenth-century France to see what life was like in a royal kitchen! Jean the kitchen boy's life is chaotic, but he is willing to do what it takes to fulfill his dream of becoming an excellent chef.

Ma Première Mythologie

Hélène Kérillès, 2017



Discover the heroes, heroines and monsters of Greek mythology. This series is ideal for children who are starting to read chapter books.

(Owl Diaries) Hibou Hebdo

Rebecca Elliott, 2016



This adorably illustrated series centers upon Eva Wingdale, a creative and ambitious owl. Readers who enjoy stories about animals will be enchanted by Eva and her positive attitude.

Super Hakim

François Gravel, 2016

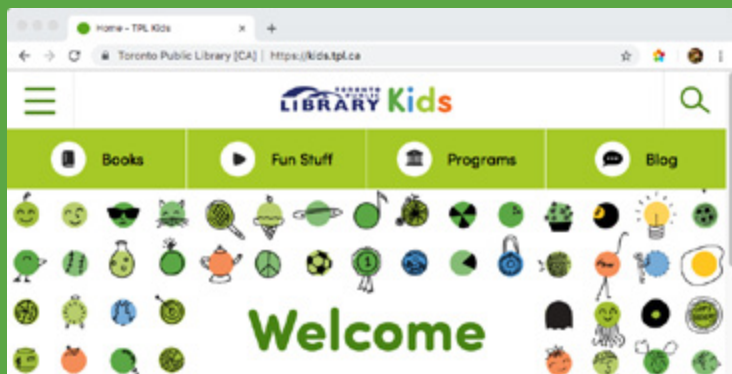


Has Hakim let his imagination run away with him, or is his new sweater really magical? Either way, he isn't going to let his new powers go to waste!

Check out our new website for kids 6-12!

Recommended books, jokes, program listings and more!

[tpl.ca/kids](https://kids.tpl.ca)



Leading to Reading

A free program for children to learn and practice their reading skills
in a fun environment. For kids 6-12.

tpl.ca/leadingtoreading



tpl.ca/kids