

Mentor Tips:

ENGAGING RELUCANT READERS

Mentors want to make the most of their reading time with students. It can be a challenge to give your student partner the enriched reading experience you are hoping for, especially for students who may be:

- reluctant to read aloud
- self-conscious about skill level
- lacking experience with reading as an enjoyable pastime

The excellent website that accompanies PBS's Reading Rockets children's program offers tips for reading well with children.. Here are a few ideas that can work for you, adapted for the Power Lunch program:

Make books special. Turn books and reading into something special by treating them as precious. Help your student see the books on the Power Lunch carts as carefully selected for his or her enjoyment. Show delight as you browse the book carts. Pull titles for your student, and be enthusiastic about the subject matter.

Get them to read another one. Find ways to encourage your student 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 your School Coordinator to ask teachers, librarians, and others at the school for recommendations that match your child's interests and reading level, or look for suggestions on www.readingrockets.org.

"Are we there yet?" If your student finds it tiring to read straight through a session, try to inject a little wordplay into your conversations. 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?

Crack open the dictionary. Use a dictionary with your student. Sometimes it will be up to you to inject the idea of using reference books. Say something like, "Hmm, I'm not sure what that word means... I think I'll look it up." Or you might suggest that it's fun to find where a story is located using an atlas, a map or a globe. Get your School Coordinator to help you locate these tools.

Teach your student partner some "mind tricks." You can give your mentee tips for figuring out the meaning of what he or she reads. Show your student 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.

Talk about what you see and do. Talking about everyday activities helps build your mentee's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension.

A creative approach to mentoring young readers can go a long way toward teaching children that reading is fun, can open doors, and can rock their world. Amazing things can happen in the pages of a book!



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