



### Welcome back to the new program year, Reading Mentors!

Every reading session is an opportunity to guide your student to success. Here are a few tips and strategies a mentor can use to spark a lifelong passion for reading and learning!

**Look through the book first!** Sometimes a bit of an “orientation” can help you and the child warm up to the book, or decide if it may be too difficult.

**Know your level!** An “instructional level” of reading aloud is when one in 10 words is difficult for the child to read. Here’s where the “five-finger rule” comes into play: If more than five words on a page cause a child to stumble, the book is too hard!

**Stick with your student’s comfort level!** Remember – we are not teachers or tutors. It is fine to read a book that you might think is “too easy” for your student’s grade level. The comfort of familiar text can be empowering!

**Let the student self-correct!** Self-regulation by the child is so very important. Give your student plenty of chances to correct pronunciation or word choice.

**Check comprehension!** It’s the most important thing to fully engage a child in the reading process – and it’s the quickest way to make a child feel successful. Ask plenty of gentle comprehension questions: “Why do you think the character is happy?”

**Do not over-correct!** Only correct errors that will force the student to lose track of the meaning of the passage. A rule of thumb: pick only one or two errors to correct in a typical reading session. If it does not change the meaning, it is usually better to leave it alone!

**Use context cues!** Try to avoid saying “sound it out.” Sounding out may be difficult or impossible if a child does not know what sound a letter blend makes, or continues to choose the wrong sound when there are many choices. Instead, encourage the child to use context cues – pictures on the page, surrounding words and phrases, etc.

**We hope these tips help to make your reading sessions more productive, more successful, and more enjoyable than ever this year. Remember: The final rule on our students’ program contract is to have fun!**