

The Parent Post

Dear Parents, Family, and Caregivers,

As a child learns to read, they need the space to practice what they are learning. Reading at home is so important in many ways. Reading at home can help your child's confidence and allows you a window into the work they are doing. It is also important to know that reading to your child is different than allowing your child to read to you.

Reading to your child helps them grow their vocabulary, their background knowledge, and their ability to discuss and comprehend what they are reading. Reading to your child can be done with any kinds of books you choose. This is a wonderful way to share your own lives, traditions, travel, and more with your child.

Giving your child a chance to practice reading to you supports their progress in independent reading and word accuracy. As a parent, it can be overwhelming to choose books for your child or to know what they can and cannot do yet.

There are two types of books sold for early readers: decodable books and leveled readers. The distinction is important, as one helps students practice and the other could cause frustration or guessing for a learning reader.

Decodable books are books that children can “sound out” at their ability level. This means that it will depend on which letter sounds or phonics we have learned in class. I am happy to help you find books that would fit this skill level for your child, so do not hesitate to ask for help!

Leveled readers have larger words with high-level phonics structures and sight words that your child may not have been exposed to. Although the books can be read once students have mastered certain levels of phonics, the books can cause frustration as children are

Decodable Books vs. Leveled Readers

being asked to read words above their ability level. These are often the books marketed as "early readers" and might have "levels" on the cover that make them appear to fit a beginning reader. Since we focus on helping students learn the code behind reading, we use decodable books in the beginning stages to allow students to practice and feel confident without getting overwhelmed or being pushed to guess words to read the whole sentence.

We want reading to be fun, and for you to get to experience the joy that can come with your little reader feeling successful. Please let me know if you want help or guidance in choosing books for practice.

Example sentences from decodable books vs. leveled readers

(words that are not decodable for a student at the mentioned Step are underlined)

| Step/skills-level | Decodable books | Leveled books |
|--|---|---|
| <u>Step 1</u> : cvc words (consonant-vowel-consonant words) | Bug sat on a log. <u>He</u> got wet! | Bug <u>laid next to the</u> <u>lake</u> . |
| <u>Step 1</u> : cvc words (consonant-vowel-consonant words) | Sam has a box. A van is in <u>the</u> box. | <u>The boy</u> has a <u>new</u> <u>toy</u> . |
| <u>Step 2</u> : short vowels and blends | Dog hit <u>the</u> gas and <u>the</u> van went fast! | <u>The car drove quickly</u> on <u>the road</u> . |
| <u>Step 2</u> : short vowels and blends | Tim gets his bag and his pens. | <u>Maria sees her</u> <u>backpack</u> and <u>the</u> <u>pencils</u> . |
| <u>Step 2</u> : short vowels and blends | Cat gets stuck in a web. Yuck! | A <u>spider made</u> a web. |