

A Letter to Families About the Library Area

Dear families,

Every day that your children and I are together at school, they will hear books and stories read aloud. I will choose books about a variety of topics—including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry—that I believe your children will enjoy listening to, thinking about, discussing, and learning from.

However, children also need a chance to explore books on their own.

In our classroom, we have a special spot that we call our classroom Library area. Here, children may choose books from a large collection to hold, look through, think about, talk about, and use to practice the skills that will help them become lifelong readers.

When you visit our classroom, ask your child to show you the books she enjoys most in our Library area. Meanwhile, you can extend the ways your child can benefit from the many advantages of our classroom Library area by creating a space (or several spaces!) for books at home.

What You Can Do at Home

- The most important thing you can do is to read to your child every day. When your child sits next to you as you read, he begins to connect reading books with good feelings. Don't be surprised if your child requests a favorite book over and over and over. Not only do children take comfort in knowing how a story will end, but they also learn something new with each repeated reading.
- When you talk about fiction/make-believe books with your child, use “feelings” words like *happy*, *sad*, *hopeful*, *scared*, *worried*, *confused*, *disappointed*, *satisfied*, and *grateful* to help her understand characters, their problems, and their solutions to those problems. Doing so supports your child's understanding of the story while also supporting her social-emotional development and decision-making skills.
- Some children prefer nonfiction books as a source of content learning. Animals, plants, vehicles, and sports are popular topics, but your child's interests might be drawn toward others, such as art, cooking, or history. When you talk with your child about the nonfiction books she enjoys, ask what she has learned from these books as well as what else she'd like to find out.
- Visit your local public library. As soon as your child is old enough, help him get his own library card. Help him learn to be a responsible caretaker of the books he checks out.
- When reading fiction selections, ask questions such as “What do you think will happen next?,” “Why do you think that character did that?,” and “What would you have done in that situation if you were that character?” When reading nonfiction, ask content questions about both the words and the pictures. Help your child realize that the words and the pictures work together to tell the same story (fiction) or teach us different aspects of a topic (nonfiction).