



Neptune Township School District
Elementary English Language Arts Department

LITERACY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF FOURTH GRADERS



Much of the 4th grade reading curriculum teaches students how to analyze the books they read. Rather than just understand the plot and information given in a text, students are encouraged to think about the messages in a text and how it relates to their own lives. They also compare texts to each other and make connections both within one text and across multiple texts. In short, 4th graders begin to learn how to “think” and talk about a text in order to find their deeper meanings and messages. This is done both with texts students read independently and texts read by the whole class or smaller groups of students. Teachers may often use a class read-aloud to show students strategies for thinking about and analyzing what they read, encouraging them to do this in their own reading. Students also do this as they write in more detail about the texts they read. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

- **Read and Research Together:** Read the same book as your child independently, together, or a combination of both. Talk about the books as you read them, reviewing main ideas and plots and expressing your opinions on the book. Then read an additional book or books on the same subject and compare and contrast how the books both dealt with the same issue. For example, read two fiction books about family, or two different texts about the same historical event or non-fiction topic.
- **Compare Perspectives:** Read two texts, one that is first-hand and one written in third person about the same event. Talk with your child about the differences and why she thinks these differences exist. Or try this yourself! After sharing an event with your child, each of you can write about it from your own perspective. Or choose an event one of you experienced first-hand that both of you can write about individually. Talk about the differences between what you wrote to gain a better understanding of perspective.
- **Read magazine and newspaper articles,** focusing on illustrations, graphs, or charts. Point out to your child what they show, ask her to help you interpret them, and discuss how they help explain or elaborate on the text.
- **Ask Why:** When your child expresses his opinion or states his ideas about something, ask him why he thinks that or how he knows it to be true. This will help him learn to support his opinion with reasons and/or facts. Do the same when you express your opinion or ideas about something.

- **Practice Typing:** Encourage your child to practice his typing skills. Use typing games or make up your own games such as giving your child a word to spell and timing how fast he can type it.
- **Email with your Child:** Set up an email account for your child and write emails describing your days to each other. Include details, conversations, thoughts, and emotions you had. This can be done in addition to generally encouraging (and supervising) your child's use of technology — helping him use it for research, writing, and communicating with others. As always, be cautious of your child's technology use by monitoring and supervising how much it is used and with whom he communicates.
- **Practice Note Taking:** When you and your child go somewhere like a museum or on a trip, or even when you or child just talks about something interesting or of importance, pretend to be reporters and take notes. Both you and your child can take notes and then use those notes to later describe what you learned. You can even relay your "reports" as a newscaster would on a news show.