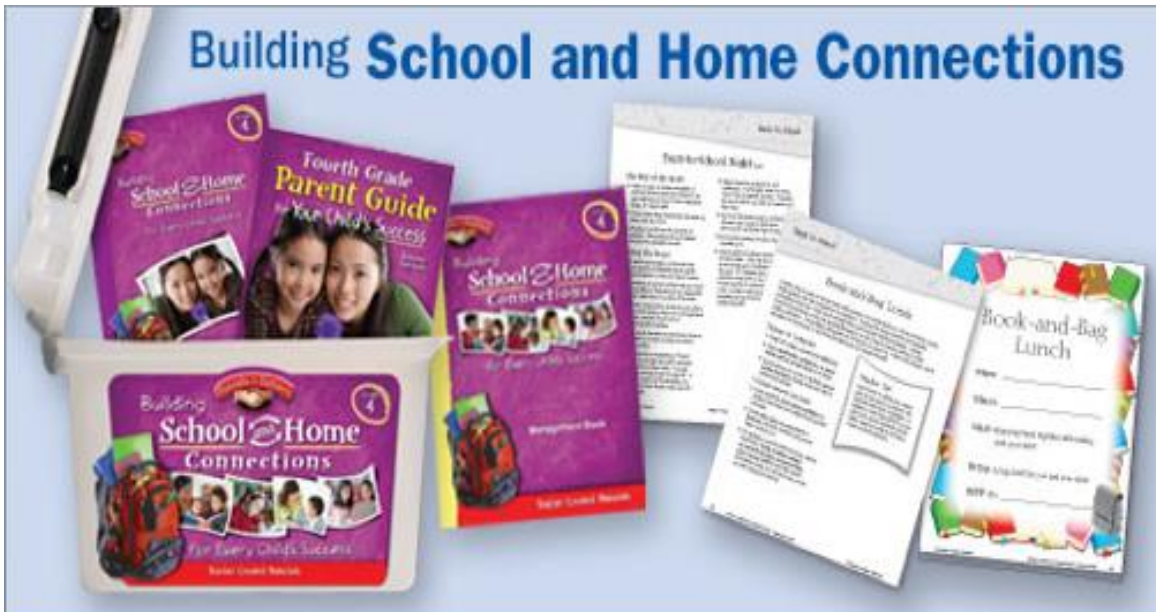


Building School & Home Connections



The image displays a variety of materials related to the 'Building School and Home Connections' program. At the top, the title 'Building School and Home Connections' is written in blue. Below it, there are several items: a white marker, a purple 'Fourth Grade Parent Guide for Your Child's Success', a purple 'Building School & Home Connections' book, a white 'Teacher's Toolkit', a white 'Parent's Toolkit', and a colorful 'Book-and-Bag Lunch' form. A white bucket in the foreground contains a purple 'Building School & Home Connections' book and a red 'Super Lunch Recipe' book. The bottom section of the image features a blue background with a quote in yellow and white text.

“There’s no stopping a child’s potential when key players team-up to ensure a child’s success.”
- Dr. Danny Brassell, lead consultant
Building School and Home Connections (Shell, 2012)

Parents as Partners

DIRECTIONS: List all of the ways that you can attract parents and other community members to come volunteer in your classroom.

Working with Struggling Readers

One Hour a Week

The Six-Blocks Program

** taken from my book "Readers for Life: The Ultimate Reading Fitness Guide, Grades K-8" (Heinemann, 2006)*

Talk with your student	<i>Book</i> Talk	Picture Read
Read Aloud	Partner Read	Writing/ Games

I designed a simple program for parents, community volunteers and older siblings/peers to use when working with students for one hour a week. Each box represents 10 minutes, and the order is purely suggested. Some boxes may take longer. As students' attention spans tend to wander, I advise volunteers never to spend more than 20 minutes on any one activity.

I have found that with a little guidance and limited training, anyone can learn how to utilize basic literacy strategies to assist struggling and reluctant readers. This component of any reading program is usually most effective because it encourages one-to-one interaction (I have often trained upper elementary and middle school students to work with lower elementary school students).

A more detailed explanation of each component ensues.

Six Blocks Program, 1: Talk with Your Student

DIRECTIONS: Get to know students by asking them about themselves (and telling them about yourself). You can make notes in the boxes below or allow students to write/draw answers. The point of this activity is: (a) to make students feel more comfortable with you and (b) to learn about students' interests so you may find appropriate reading materials.

WHO DO YOU LIVE WITH?	HOBBIES
FAVORITE FOOD	FAVORITE SUBJECTS
IF YOU COULD GO ANYWHERE, WHERE WOULD YOU GO?	FAVORITE BOOK
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?	OTHER INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT YOU

Six Blocks Program, 2: Book Talk

- Pick out a variety of books (your local children’s librarian can help you select 15-20 unique titles).
- “Sell” the books without giving everything away. You are like a waiter trying to unload every last item by making them all sound enticing.
- Make sure all of your books are enticing. When you come across a “clunker,” tell your student.
- If you speak students’ primary language, find some reading materials in that language so they can practice in English *AND* their primary language.

Six Blocks Program, 3: Picture Read

- Select a cool book with pictures that tell the story (again, you can ask your local children’s librarian for suggestions).
- Share the book with your student. Ask them to look at the pictures and tell you what is going on. Do not read the words.
- Ask “pointed” questions so that your student describes specific items you want them to observe.
- Review what student has observed, and read the story. Now read the words.

Six Blocks Program, 4: Read Aloud

- Reading aloud to children is the single-greatest thing you can do to enhance a child’s literacy.
- Regardless of language, kids that are read aloud to perform better in reading than kids that are not read aloud to. Read aloud to students in English. Read aloud to students in their primary language.
- Ask questions.
- Act out what you read. In other words, make the story come to life.
- For more tips, buy Jim Trelease’s fantastic book, *The Read Aloud Handbook*.

Six Blocks Program, 5: Partner Read

- Countdown (e.g. 1-2-3).
- Read aloud together. Partner points to words.
- Student signal (e.g. tap on shoulder). Student points to words and reads aloud solo.
- If student stumbles on a word, give student a chance to guess word (e.g. count to 5).
- Give clues (e.g. sounds like, rhymes with, look at picture, context, etc.).
- Partner signal. Resume reading aloud together.
- Repeat reading until student can read solo.

Six Blocks Program, 6: Writing/Games

Writing Ideas	Literacy Game Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ Design a new book cover ✍ Draw your own pictures of sequence ✍ Create your own “environmental print” ✍ Write a sequel/different ending ✍ What would you have done? ✍ Create a song about the book ✍ Silly Sentences ✍ Make lists ✍ Write a skit ✍ Journal ✍ Create your own trading cards ✍ Translate text into another language ✍ Create a game based on book ✍ Poetry ✍ Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scrabble <input type="checkbox"/> Word jumbles <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental print “words before your eyes” <input type="checkbox"/> Hang-person <input type="checkbox"/> Memory <input type="checkbox"/> Synonym Squeeze <input type="checkbox"/> Word banks <input type="checkbox"/> Crosswords <input type="checkbox"/> Word parts <input type="checkbox"/> Mad Libs <input type="checkbox"/> Sniglets <input type="checkbox"/> Idiom pictures <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence mobiles (cut out pictures & create sentence) <input type="checkbox"/> Boggle <input type="checkbox"/> Etc.

Read Aloud

The single most important thing you can do to help your children become better and more passionate readers is to read aloud to them often. The single best resource you can use to help you read aloud better with your children is Jim Trelease's *The Read Aloud Handbook* (Penguin, 2006). By the way – Jim is the best speaker in the business, and you should stampede to his talk if you ever see that he is in your area.

Here are some tips when reading aloud to your children:

- FEAST on three-a-day: It is not education unless you create a clever acronym, so I used to “FEAST” on three great read alouds with my students everyday. FEAST stands for Favorite book (this is a book that your child is very enthusiastic about, like a cool chapter in the latest Harry Potter book); EASy book (this is a book that I have read aloud at least five times before and know that my child can read aloud confidently, even if s/he has memorized it); and Tough books (this is a book that is written at a level well above your child's reading level: keep in mind that young children especially can understand at a higher level than they can read on their own).
- Your presentation matters: make the read aloud memorable.
- Interactive: get your children involved in the story by allowing them to echo key phrases, etc.
- Sound effects: allow students to make animal noises for animal books, ghost noises for scary stories, etc.
- Change Names: kids, in my experience, are more likely to be drawn to books with characters that have their names and the names of their friends (replace Dick and Jane with Jose and Shaneka).
- Allow movement: get your kids physically involved in a story (let them act like they are swimming or running or whatever the story calls for).
- Build anticipation: you do not have to always finish a story; leave the children at a cliffhanger so that they are motivated to read the ending on their own.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat. Repetition builds confidence. Read aloud the same story as often as your children want.

Reading Rewards

Parents and teachers always ask me how they can reward their children for reading. Well, the first reward I recommend is candy. Kids love candy. Soda and pizza also work, and if your child still needs motivation, give him/her \$20-\$50.

Uh, no. Kids are not stupid. They know that if you have to bribe them to read, reading is not worth doing on its own. By bribing students for reading you are sending exactly the wrong message.

If you want to reward students for reading, make reading the reward. Buy books and other reading materials for your child. Praise your child frequently so your child associates reading with pleasure. You can find a ton of wonderful rewards at any Dollar Tree or 99 Cent Store, including coloring books, writing materials, journals, books, stickers, etc. Allow your child to read whatever, whenever and with whomever s/he wants (you can quote me on that). A few other dazzling tips:

- Reward Children with Reading Time: tell your children that if they finish all of their chores, etc., that you will read aloud an extra story to them, etc.
- Get Children Library Cards: train your children how to use the library and obtain materials for themselves.
- Get Children on Junk Mail Lists: increase print in your home and motivation in your children by getting them on travel brochure lists, catalog lists, etc. Encourage your children to write famous athletes, politicians, actors, authors, etc.
- TV-Book: allow children to turn on their favorite TV programs only after you read aloud a book together.
- Closed-Captioning on TV: when your TV is on, turn on the closed-captioning button so children are exposed to print as they view.

Notes & Doodles