Raising Readers: Tips for Parents

Strategies to Support Comprehension

Comprehension is the purpose for reading. To support comprehension development at-home, teachers can share the 3-2-1 and Read, Cover, Remember, Retell strategies with parents.

3-2-1

The 3-2-1 strategy (Zygouris-Coe, Wiggins, & Smith, 2004) can be used with any nonfiction text (e.g., science textbook, social studies textbook, newspaper article, magazine article). Parents can ask children to share 3 things they discovered from reading the text, 2 things they found interesting, and 1 question they still have about the text. Figure 1 lists the steps for the 3-2-1 strategy. Even if parents have not read the text, they can talk with their children about the content of the text by using the 3-2-1 strategy.

The 3-2-1 strategy can also be used to discuss a television program, movie, or unit of study at school. For example, a parent could say, “Let’s do 3-2-1 for your Social Studies unit at school. What are 3 things you discovered from this unit? What are 2 things you found interesting? What is 1 question you still have?” This strategy builds comprehension and provides an opportunity to review content. Parents can easily implement this strategy while helping their children with homework involving reading textbooks, studying for tests, and even at the dinner table as they reflect on the school day.
Some parents may ask for suggestions to help their child while reading assigned texts at home. The Read, Cover, Remember, Retell strategy (Hoyt, 2002) can easily be used at home by parents and children. When using this strategy, children should read only about as much text as they can cover with their hand (usually no more than a paragraph). Next, they should cover that piece of text. Then, they should take a moment to remember what they read by thinking about it. If they can’t remember the information, they can go back and take another look at the text. Finally, they retell the information they just read to a parent or family member. The steps are outlined in Figure 2.

**Read, Cover, Remember, Retell Strategy**

**READ** only as much as your hand can cover.

**COVER** the words with your hand.

**REMEMBER** what you have just read. (It is okay to take another look).

**RETELL** what you just read inside your head or to a partner.

When parents start to use the Read, Cover, Remember, Retell strategy with their children, they can apply it consistently as they work through a piece of text, paragraph-by-paragraph. With more practice, children can retell the information in their own heads which will support their comprehension development.

References:

Questions or Comments?
Reach us at:
Jerry L. Johns Literacy Clinic
3100 Sycamore Rd. Suite 2003
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815)753-1416 literacyclinic@niu.edu