



Growing readers!

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Preparing 21st Century Learners

Today's young learner will grow up in world much different from the one her parents grew up in. Our interconnected and digital world demands a lot of our learners. Reading skill remains as important as ever, but other critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are equally as important.

What can families do to prepare 21st century learners? While not an exhaustive list, here are six suggestions to get you started:

1. **Ask your library's media specialist for help** finding interesting and engaging information books. Include nonfiction texts in your stack each time you go to the library. Sharing information books with your young child helps foster a sense of learning from a very young age.
2. **Share interesting vocabulary** from the information books you're reading. Spend time on individual words, and also share your excitement about words specific to a particular subject of study. Discuss words that have multiple or complex meanings. Discuss those words and how they add to what the writer is saying.
3. **Support your child's reading** by encouraging him to work through books that may initially seem too difficult. Read and reread the books together, taking time to talk about the key details from the text. Ask "why" and "how" questions that encourage your child to analyze the text.
4. **Use book illustrations, pictures, and graphics** to help guide your discussions. Work together to identify what person, place, thing, or idea a picture or diagram shows. Learning to "read" graphics is a skill that will be used throughout a person's life.
5. **Ask your child, "Is there more you would like to know more about?"** Then begin to look for more resources from the library or online. Learning to integrate information on a topic from multiple sources is an important skill.
6. **Continue to write together.** Get creative about setting a purpose for writing time. This may include writing book, movie or recipe reviews. Imagine the fun your child will have writing reviews for meals! As you write, encourage your child to use as many specific terms and vocabulary as possible.

Preparing today's learners for tomorrow's world is a journey filled with reading, writing, reflection, and evaluation. These five suggestions will set you off on the right path!