



Tips for Reach Out and Read Volunteer Readers

Adapted from *Hints on How to Read Aloud to a Group* by America Reads at Bank Street College of Education (1997) and *Denver Public Library's Read Aloud Information Sheet*.

- **Introduce yourself to parents and children.** We have provided a Reach Out and Read apron and badge to identify you as a volunteer. Tell the child/children you are going to read a story and invite them to listen. Talk to children at their eye level.
- **Select a book that is age-appropriate for you audience.** Babies like board books that are small in size, have few words, and feature pictures of babies. Toddlers like simple rhymes and predictable text, books about children, animals, and trucks. Preschoolers prefer books that tell stories, counting books, and alphabet books.
- **Introduce the book.** Hold the book so all children can see. Point out the cover illustration, title, and author. Invite older children to predict what the book is about or talk about how they might relate to the book or other books they've heard or read. For example, if reading *Curious George*, you might ask, "Have you read any other books about monkeys?"
- **Read with expression.** Let your voice reflect the tone of the story or personality of the characters. Don't read too fast. Vary your pace so you can pause for emphasis.
- **Watch your audience.** Watch the children's body language and expressions and be sensitive to signs of boredom or confusion. If a book is not working, don't be afraid to stop (without treating it like a punishment). You could say, "Should we try a different book instead?"
- **Encourage discussion about the story.** Point out parts of the story you especially liked. Ask the children questions about what's going on and encourage them to predict what will happen next. Be sure, though, not to turn the discussion into a quiz.
- **Remember that for some children, listening to stories is a new experience.** Some children aren't used to being read to and will need to develop that interest. Reading short, interesting stories with strong pictures and reading with expression can help hold their attention.
- **Have a good time!** Sharing books with children is a fun and rewarding experience. If you are enjoying yourself, the children will too.