

Tip Sheet: Ask Questions During a Read Aloud

FOR PRESCHOOL PARENTS

For additional support on this topic, visit <https://bit.ly/QTAskQuestions> to view a short video.

WHY?

Asking questions while sharing a book can be the start of a conversation that will help your child develop oral language skills. It also allows you to check your child's understanding – do they know what's going on in the story? If not, go back and reread or explain some parts that are confusing. This will help their overall comprehension of the book.

WHAT?

The types of questions you can ask while reading to your child can be described in different ways.

- **Closed** questions are usually answered with just a few words or a quick phrase. For example:
 - Parent: **"What is the character doing now?"**
 - Child: **"Eating watermelon."**
- **Open** questions encourage longer responses. For example:
 - Parent: **"What does this remind you of?"**
 - Child: **"When we ate watermelon at the picnic. It was delicious!"**

Another way to think about questions is whether they are literal or inferential.

- **Literal** questions are answered directly from the book. For example:
 - Parent: **"What animals do lions hunt?"**
- **Inferential** questions require children to think a bit more to form an answer because it's not directly in the text.
 - Parent: **"How are lions like house cats?"**

HOW?

When you read aloud to your child, stop every now and then to ask questions. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Make sharing a book a part of your routine.** Popular times for read alouds are after coming home from work or school or during the bedtime routine.
- **Glance through the book ahead of time** to know what it is about. This can help you think about questions to ask your child.
- **Ask a variety of questions**, including questions about what the book says and what it makes your child think about.
- **Notice what your child is interested in** and ask questions about those things to start a conversation.
- **Share your thinking and ideas about the book with your child.** For example, "I'm wondering what this girl is going to do next. What do you think she's going to do?"