

August 2021

Dear Parents,

For the past few years, my students have NOT been asked to fill out a reading log in order to keep track of their at-home reading. Also, they will not be asked to get a signature in their agenda proving they have read that night. Instead, they are required to set monthly reading goals, read during independent reading time at school, and jot down the titles of books they finish on their goal sheets.

This does NOT mean that students are not expected to read outside of school. It is my hope that throughout the course of this school year, all of my students will continue to find ways to make reading a daily part of their lives at home and school. One of my greatest goals every school year is to ensure that every child becomes and/or remains a lifelong reader. However, I do not believe that filling out a reading log each night is the best way for fifth graders to become or remain lifelong readers.

Here are a few ideas on how you can help to ensure that your child is reading outside of school without depending on a reading log to make them read:

1. Create a sacred time during the day or at night where everyone in the house is reading. When everyone in the house is reading, students will be more likely to WANT to read. Creating the conditions for reading allows everyone to find more success in their own reading. I know that we are all incredibly busy, but imagine how powerful **thirty minutes** of everyone in the house reading could be! Read alongside your child.
2. Even as fifth graders, children love doing things WITH their parents and I know that I am eager to find things to do WITH my child.
3. One of the greatest things about reading is being able to discuss what you are reading with others. By reading the same books that your child is reading, you can provide your child with opportunities to have the kinds of discussions that will motivate your child to keep on reading.
4. Make sure your child sees YOU reading. Even when your child is NOT reading, if he or she sees you reading, they will know that reading is something that you take joy in and that you make sure to make time for. This creates the kind of culture of reading that motivates students to find ways to become readers themselves (even outside of school).
5. Take your child to the library. Taking trips to the local library can provide your family with access to incredible books and also access to librarians and other resources that can help guide your child towards even more books.
6. Ask your child about the books he/she is reading. The more kids talk about the books they are reading, the more they will want to keep reading! Knowing that there are people at home who are interested in what they are reading and what they have to say about that reading, can sometimes be the push that children need to keep on reading through the tough parts of a book. Even if a child is not enjoying a particular book, you can learn a lot about a person as a reader, and they can learn a lot about themselves, by discussing what it is they do not like.
7. Tell your child about the books you are reading, but also make sure to tell your child about how you selected the books that you are reading. Talk about the books you love and talk about the books you do not like. Letting your child see that you

struggle at times and are still a reader will help your child to see that even if he or she struggles, he or she is still a reader.

8. Do not judge what your child is reading as not being "good enough." Sometimes, it is tempting to tell our children that what they are reading is not "real" reading. I believe that all reading has value. Every positive reading experience children have, where they make it through an entire text, will make it more likely that they will pick up another text because they believe they can be successful. Please know that, in school, I am exposing your child to many different types of texts and modeling the strategies they need to navigate through those texts. At home, they need to be able to read what they love. Because when they find books they love, they will be choosing to read more often. When we stop them from reading the books that they love because we do not think they are "good enough" then we are making it less likely that they will fall in love with reading. So while it is great to encourage children to try new kinds of texts, it can be harmful to insist that they cannot read what they love to read.
9. Read in the "moments in-between." Sometimes, the best places to find time to read are in the moments in-between other things. Waiting at a dentist's office, waiting for a sibling in the car, before their friend comes over, these are all possible moments to read. When we start to "sneak" in more reading, we are often surprised at how quickly we are working through books.
10. Help your child to use online resources to locate new books that are similar to books he/she has loved in the past. Finding good books to read can be the hardest part of being a reader. We are lucky to live in a world that has lots of incredible resources to help people find good books. Most of the books that I read come from the online suggestions of others or from lists of good books.

Throughout the year, we will continue to build a community of readers inside of our classroom walls. Extending this community outside of the classroom walls can have huge benefits. Through my conversations with readers and through my observations, I will be able to tell who is struggling to read outside of school and meet their reading goals, and I will meet with those students to brainstorm ways to be more successful.

At any time, if you have concerns about your child's reading habits, please feel free to contact me. Conversations with students that allow us to problem solve and make adjustments go much further than punishments for not getting a reading log signed.

I look forward to a year filled with reading!

Sincerely,
Megan Drayton