PARENTS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN READING STRATEGIES

Maplebrook Elementary School

Naperville, Illinois

Many studies show that parent involvement improves student achievement, attitudes, and aspirations. Surveys of parents indicate that most families want to be able to talk with, monitor, encourage, and guide their children as students. Out of a desire to support our students and families, the Maplebrook Literacy Expert Group, composed of nine teachers and a parent representative, sponsored and presented Parents Actively Involved in Reading Strategies (P.A.I.R.S).

At the P.A.I.R.S. event, a storyteller engaged children while their parents participated in a presentation. The presentation included: information on reading fluency and its impact on children's comprehension, interpretation, and expression; an audio taped student demonstration of the four levels of rating fluency; and an explanation of the Goldilocks Strategy for selecting reading materials that are leveled "just right" for children. The event also provided insights into appropriate book selections, a preview by the Learning Resource Center director of new high-interest/low-reading-level books, and a brief presentation by Maplebrook's social worker that described the Parent Resource Library and reviewed several books for parents.

Following the program, parents put their newly learned techniques to immediate practice as their children joined them. Together they enjoyed checking out books as a family. At the conclusion of the evening, parents obtained a booklet containing the fluency scale and a list of the recommended titles for reading at each level, as well as a Goldilocks Strategy bookmark (both of which had been produced by our business partner Minuteman Press).

Comment sheets distributed and completed at the end of the evening indicated that participants felt the evening was a great success.

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Goldilocks Strategy
To Choose Books

Too Easy Books
Ask yourself these questions. If you are answering YES, this book is probably "*Too Easy*" for you. Have fun reading it!

1. Have you read it lots of times before?
2. Do you understand the story (text) well?
3. Do you know (can you understand) almost every word?
4. Can you read it smoothly?

Just Right Books
Ask yourself these questions. If you are answering YES, this book is probably "just right" for you. Go ahead learn from it!

1. Is this book new to you?
2. Do you understand some of the book?
3. Are there just a few words per page you don't know?
4. When you read are some places smooth and some choppy?
5. Can someone help you with this book? Who?

Too Hard Books
Ask yourself these questions. If you are answering YES, this book is probably "Too Hard" for you. Spend a little time with it now. Give it another try later (perhaps in a couple of months).

1. Are there more than a few words on a page you don't know?
2. Are you confused about what is happening in most of the book?
3. When you read, does it sound pretty choppy?
4. Is everyone else busy and unable to help you?

*** This is an enlarged copy of the bookmark that was given to each family as a reminder of the Goldilocks Strategy for choosing appropriately leveled reading books for children. The bookmark was designed and printed for Maplebrook and our P.A.I.R.S. program by our business partner Ray Kinney of Minuteman Press.