

Read Together Guide

Two simple strategies to use during any story time

You don't need a teaching degree to make story time more powerful. These two research-backed strategies take no extra materials — just a book and a few minutes.

Strategy 1: The Picture Walk

Before reading a single word, flip through the book together and simply look at the pictures. This activates what your child already knows and builds curiosity before the story even starts.

1 Open to the cover

Ask: "What do you think this book might be about?"

2 Flip through slowly

Pause on 3-4 pictures and ask: "What's happening here?"

3 Make a prediction together

"What do you think will happen next?" — there's no wrong answer

4 Now read the story

See how close your predictions were as you go!

Why it works: Picture walks build background knowledge and vocabulary before the harder work of decoding words begins — so a child is never starting from zero.

 Grab any picture book from your shelf — you're ready to try this tonight!

Strategy 2: The Think-Aloud

While reading, pause occasionally to say your own thoughts out loud. This models what strong readers actually do inside their heads — ask questions, make guesses, notice feelings.

1 Pick a natural pause point

A page turn, a surprising moment, or the end of a sentence

2 Say what you're thinking

Out loud, in your own voice — not quizzing, just modeling

3 Keep reading

You don't need to stop on every page — a few per book is plenty

4 Invite them to try it too

"What are you thinking right now?"

Phrases to Borrow

When...	Try saying...
A character makes a choice	"Hmm, I wonder why she did that."
Something surprising happens	"Whoa, I did not expect that!"
A new word appears	"That's a tricky word — let's figure it out together."
Before turning the page	"I bet... let's see if I'm right."
At the end of the book	"What was your favorite part, and why?"

Remember: You're not testing your child with these strategies — you're showing them what good readers sound like inside their own heads. Modeling first, always.