**What is Reading Fluency? Adapted from http://www.education.com/magazine/article/increase-reading-fluency/**

Reading fluency is the ability to read words accurately and rapidly. When fluent readers read aloud, they do so almost effortlessly and with expression. Even when fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically and do not spend undue amounts of time trying to decode words. This ability is an important component of reading comprehension (understanding what is read). Children who are not fluent readers read hesitantly and with great effort, struggling to sound out each word. These children spend too much mental energy identifying words, leaving little energy to focus on comprehension

**What can I do to help my child become a fluent reader?**

Fluency develops gradually **with substantial practice**, but you can help this process along. Several easy strategies for guiding your child towards increased reading fluency are outlined below. The only materials you will need are books your child enjoys, some type of recording device, and a simple stopwatch to measure your child’s progression in fluency.

**Memorize, memorize, memorize!**

**Encourage your child to memorize short books, poems and chants**. Children who memorize something as a beginning reader feel like successful, fluent readers already and are strongly motivated to continue “reading.” In addition, your child can more easily practice using good expression as he reads because the memorized pieces are familiar to him.

**Echo-Echo Read**

As your child begins to recognize words, help your child to anchor these words into her sight vocabulary (words recognized automatically) through echo reading with her.

Initially, read a sentence to your child and have her read it back to you. You may want to encourage your child to run her finger under the words as she reads them. Some children learn best through physically manipulating objects, even the books they read. As your child becomes more adept at reading a sentence back to you, increase the number of sentences you read and she echoes. Pay particular attention to your expression as you read since this is what your child will be modeling back to you.

**Repeated Readings**

All children love games and challenges. Challenge your child to beat his own reading record through repeated readings of the same passage. Follow these steps for a highly motivating and effective strategy to increase your child’s reading fluency.

1. Choose, or have your child choose, a short selection he enjoys reading. The selection should be between 50 and 200 words in length. This selection should be just difficult enough that your child can read and understand it, but cannot yet read it fluently.
2. Tape or have your child tape his first oral reading of this passage. Undoubtedly, his reading will be slow and choppy.
3. Then, ask your child to read the passage several times (at least four) until he is able to read it fluently. You can discuss with your child the analogy of athletes developing their skills by spending considerable time practicing the same basic movements until they develop speed and effortlessness.
4. Last, tape or have your child tape a final oral reading of the passage. Listen to the difference in fluency between the two readings and celebrate your child’s success!

A variation of this activity is to measure your child’s reading progress by timing the first oral reading of the passage you or your child selected. You can use a stopwatch to time your child’s actual first reading attempt or you can time the tape recording of the first reading. After your child has read the passage several times, time your child reading the passage again and cheer about how much time he cut off his reading! Time your child’s readings in seconds, and your child will really be amazed at the time difference! Make a special reading medal and award your child’s accomplishment.

**TYPES OF BOOKS TO USE TO INCREASE READING FLUENCY**

Poetry is an awesome genre of print to use to increase reading fluency – kids of all ages love poems and the predictability to can reassuring to struggling readers. Here are some suggestions of poetry to use with your child to help increase reading fluency—

Poetry Books for Repeated and Phrased Readings

[*The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/book/random-house-book-poetry-children), selected by Jack Prelutsky

[*Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems*](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/book/sing-song-popcorn-every-childs-book-poems), selected by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, Eva Moore, Mary M. White, and Jan Carr

*Treasure Chest of Poetry*, by Bill Martin, Jr., with John Archambault and Peggy Brogan

[*The 20th Century Children's Poetry Treasury*](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/book/20th-century-childrens-poetry-treasury), selected by Jack Prelutsky

**Shel Silverstein** has poetry volumes that children adore!! Here are just a few of his works, but these poetry volumes are a treat to read–

* Where the Sidewalk Ends
* Falling UP
* A Light in the Attic
* Everything on It
* The Giving Tree – this is not a poetry book but a Shel Silverstein classic

*As always do your due diligence as SAA is not responsible for the content or themes of secular materials.*