

## ENGAGING YOUNG READERS

Books provide opportunities to engage children in the process of reading and interacting with printed words. Reading involves more than pronouncing words. Reading involves understanding words and sentences, expanding vocabulary, reacting emotionally to words, and thinking about the information on the pages. Following are a few strategies to engage young readers in the reading process.

### 1. **Connect words with the pictures.**

As you read each section, pause to discuss the relationship between words and pictures.

“Even though ants are so tiny, look how they can carry food on their backs.”

“Look how gorillas walk on their knuckles!”

### 2. **Ask questions as you read the sentences and look at the illustrations.**

“Where are the iguana’s spikes?”

“So what’s the purpose of the jellyfish’s bell?”

### 3. **Strengthen visualize memory of details without looking.**

Look away from the page. “Describe the picture for me.”

“What did the elephant have in his trunk?”

“What were the two turtles in the picture doing?”

### 4. **Strengthen memory skills.**

“What other animals did we read about that can regrow legs?”

“What other animals did we read about that walk on two legs?”

### 5. **Reinforce phonics.**

Each animal begins with a letter that represents the most common phonetic sound for that letter. For example, “ants,” represents the *short vowel a* sound.

*Brainstorm:* What other words begin with the “a” sound? (apple, alligator, animal)

*Phonetic sounds:* What’s the first sound in the word “bear”? “camel?” “dolphin?”

*Index cards:* Make a set of letter cards with one letter per card. What sound does this letter make? Go through the cards giving the common sound for that letter. You can sort the cards into two piles to show if the child knows the sounds: Knows these sounds Does not yet know these sounds.

## **6. Watch animal videos.**

Go to YouTube. Search for videos for animals in the book. You can use voice-activated devices to find videos, “YouTube. Find videos about penguins.”

## **7. Research other animals.**

Have your child think of other animals to learn more about. Use Internet searches for find videos and articles about the animals. Help the child to create his or her own animal book. Write a few sentences about the animals. Draw pictures. Assemble the pages into an original book with the child as the author!