

# February Tips for Language and Literacy Skills

*Courtesy of the GECDSB Speech and Language Department*



## Oral Language

- Help your child build their vocabulary. Children with large vocabularies understand more of what they read and hear.
  - Notice new words when you are reading or listening. Point out these new words and discuss what they mean
  - Talk about what to do when we discover a new word. Ask someone the meaning, use a dictionary etc.
  - Focus on kid-friendly definitions when explaining new words vs. complicated dictionary-style definitions (e.g., synonym = words that mean the same thing vs. a word that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word or other words in a language)
  - Keep track of words you know or learn together: list them, categorize/group them, play games with them etc.
  - When using words in our everyday language use 'wow words' or higher level versions of words they already know (e.g., Instead of 'I am so **happy**' say 'I am so **elated**', or instead of 'This is a **hard** puzzle' say 'This is a **difficult** puzzle' etc.)
  - Read every day together to expose them to lots of different vocabulary and utilize those opportunities to go over the vocabulary together

## Reading

- Work on reading fluency together:
  - Reading fluency is the smoothness of our reading. Our ability to accurately, smoothly, read a passage without slowing down to sound out words 'Reading like you talk'.
  - Here are some tips for working on this skill:
    - Practice reading grade level Dolch and Fry list words (ask your child's teacher for this information). The accuracy of your child's reading is greatly improved with knowledge of all grade level sight words.
    - Read and re-read familiar texts. Read through stories again and again to work on smoothly, accurately reading a text without sounding out words. The more you read a book, the easier it becomes to read it.

## Writing

- Have fun writing down answers to silly questions related to the month of February
- Sample Questions:
  - Pretend that Cupid took this year off from being the Valentine's Day mascot. Create a new mascot for this year. Draw a picture and explain your drawing.
  - Cupid's wing is broken. He needs your help! How will you help people fall in love?
  - February 29<sup>th</sup> only comes every 4 years. What do you think you will be doing on the next Leap Day?
  - Write a story about two animals in love. How will they spend Valentine's Day?
  - Warton Willie (groundhog from Groundhog Day) is sick! You will have to predict the weather. How will you do it? Will we have a longer winter or an early spring?