PREPARING THE CHILD FOR READING

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In formal education, reading is one of the most crucial skills that have to be develop in every learner. Parents expect their children to learn and read during their first year in school. The children also come to school eager in this expectation. Such eagerness and confidence are important factors in the child’s early and successful beginning in reading.

The grade one teachers then may ask what they should do if they are not to begin teaching reading from books on the first day of school. They should be prepared to direct a non-reading program which would stimulate desirable growth and preparation for reading by providing desirable experiences, promoting worthwhile interests, stimulating expressions, and offering opportunity for creative expression through language. During this period a teacher observes and studies so he/she may know best how to guide them. He/she must try to discover the overly confident child; the insecure child, the timid child, the secured child, the inhibited child, the dependent child, the independent child, the expressive child, the nervous child and the well-poised child.

When the teacher becomes acquainted with the children’s personal experiences, their interests, their social and emotional life, the program which will develop the various attitudes and skills necessary for learning to read may be planned. He/she may begin by conversing with the children about their homes, pets, toys, families, stories, which they know or any group of interest.

The teacher may use different reading interventions that may be applied to prepare the child in reading, some of these are:
1. **Word of the Day** - This practice may be applied in a classroom setting wherein word, meaning and sentence usage is introduced to the child. This word must be used within the day either in school or at home. With this, the child will have interest in learning new words each day.

2. **Read Aloud Everyday** - In a classroom set up for a grade one pupil it would be helpful to use print labels and signs everywhere. The teacher may put it into practice to read each label every day. This would help a child develop print awareness and use language in everyday living.

3. **ELA Store (Every Leader A Story Reader)** - Cultivating a love of books begins by reading stories to children and the best way to arouse their interest to read is through story telling using story books/big books. The teacher may lead the story telling and let the children retell the story. Through this strategy the children will be lead into new interests and new understanding which will develop into interests in reading.

4. **Buddy Reading** - it is a fun way to help other child learn to read. In this manner, a child who knows how read well reads with another child as well. Also, the big buddy may be paired to a little buddy and teach him how to read.

   Buddy reading is a strategy that improves reading performance and also a means of building self-esteem and confidence for both parties. It also promotes a higher interest and engagement in reading.

5. **Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)** - this reading practice that pair strong and weak reader who take turns reading, rereading, and retelling. Strategies that may be applied in this kind of intervention are Echo Reading, Choral Reading, Read Aloud and Take Turns Reading.
6. Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)- it is a daily reading session that last between 15 to 20 minutes. It gives the child a time to read everything they want to read and share what they have read. A mini library or reading corner may be use to put this into practice.

The struggle of Grade One pupils on learning how to read becomes a challenge to Grade One teachers where the basic foundation of learning begins. Grade one teachers must master how reading effectively operates and how such operation can be used to great advantage.

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