

# » The joy of learning together

... with the St. Petersburg Times

» Fun family activities using the St. Petersburg Times

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The more school-related activities parents participate in during their children's preschool and elementary school years lead to higher reading achievement in later years, lower rates of grade retention and fewer years in special education.
- Using the St. Petersburg Times at home will encourage reading, writing and discussions among family members. When parents spend time reading, listening to children read and talking about what is being read, they are creating a home environment that fosters high achievement.
- More than 66 major research studies have found that the most accurate predictor of student achievement is the extent to which the family is involved in the child's education.
- Reading aloud is one of the most effective techniques parents can use to improve their children's chances for success in school and in life. The United States Commission on Reading Report, "Becoming a Nation of Readers," states that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children." Not only does reading aloud increase vocabulary, language usage, listening skills, creativity and imagination, but it also strengthens the parent/child bond by creating shared experiences and opportunities for meaningful communication. So, start reading the St. Petersburg Times aloud with your child today!

## 1 PREDICT THE STORY

Have your child select a picture from the newspaper that goes with a newspaper story. Ask the child to tell a story about that picture. Read the story to your child and see how close your child's predictions were. If your child is already reading, read the story out loud together!

## 2 ONE MORE TIME

How many times have you read to your child only to have her say, "Read it again?" This is actually a very good thing! Education research shows repeated reading of the same text improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement. Appropriate comic strips are a good source for repeated reading to your child, and reading them is a good way to model fluent reading. (Don't be afraid to use funny voices!) You might ask questions like, "Did you see how I made my voice sound different for when Linus spoke from when Lucy spoke? Did you hear how my voice got louder and more excited when Lucy yelled at Charlie Brown? That's because the cartoonist put an exclamation mark at the end of his sentence." As your child gets older and begins to read for pleasure, take turns reading the different characters' lines in the comic strips.

## 3 NEWSPAPER BINGO

Recognizing letters, the sounds that they make and words that start with certain letters are important tasks that young readers must learn. By playing "Newspaper Bingo" for a few minutes each day, you can help your child be successful at this. Call out different letters of the alphabet in random order and ask players to find each letter on the front page of the St. Petersburg Times. Have them circle the letter as they find it, then copy the letter on a piece of paper. Ask your kindergarten or first-grade child these questions: "Can you tell me what sound this letter makes? Do you see any other words that begin with this letter?" Ask them to use a piece of paper and write down words (or circle in the newspaper) they find on the front page that start with those letters. Ask your children to sound out words they have found that begin with the letter you call out. For second or third graders, do the same activities as first graders, but ask them if they can tell the meaning of a word they chose.

## 4 FAVORITE SUBJECT

Make a scrapbook about a particular topic, using stories and pictures from the newspaper.

## 5 PICTURE WORDS

Help your child make a collage of pictures and headlines from the St. Petersburg Times. Variation: Make the collage of all words and pictures beginning with a specific letter. Use only pictures and words for a special category, such as food or clothing or a special holiday.

## 6 EYE ON THE WEATHER

Use the Weather page to improve your child's knowledge of weather and geography. Ask him to find where the hottest and coldest places are each day, and look for the forecast in cities where your family has relatives and friends. Check together to see what phase of the moon is present right now and when the next full moon can be seen.

## 7 BUDDY READING

Do you have older children or other family members who want to get involved? Have them also read to and with your young children. Monday's St. Petersburg Times Xpress page offers stories of high interest to children that are also enjoyable for everyone in the family.

*"I am a part of everything I have read" – John Kieran*

You can also download a comprehensive parent guide (in English or Spanish) from the Newspaper Association of America Foundation. Go to

[www.naafoundation.org/Reports-and-Publications.aspx#parentguide](http://www.naafoundation.org/Reports-and-Publications.aspx#parentguide)

