How to help your Child improve Reading Skills:

Research indicates that the best way to master a skill is PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. This is the rule for reading as well. Have you noticed that when you child reads to you, sometimes they struggle to read a word they just read on the previous page? This is typical of second graders. They are emergent readers, and as such need a lot of practice.

There really isn’t enough time during the school day to provide all the practice an emergent reader needs. In a typical school day, approximately 90 min. is set aside for Language Arts instruction. This includes writing, word attack skills, spelling, vocabulary development, grammar instruction as well as actual time for reading. On a good day, your child might get to read out loud to the teacher 1-2 min. a day. This is simply not enough. They really need 15. min. at a minimum to get the practice they need. They need to be reading out loud to an experienced reader. This provides an opportunity for immediate feedback as well as a chance for them to use their auditory skills to hear the word as they read it.

You can help a great deal at home.

There are three areas that should be focused on: Word attack skills, Fluency and Comprehension

**Word Attack skills:**

Early readers are busy using word attack skills to figure out what word they are reading. They learn the association between letters and sounds for short vowels and consonants first, and then they must add the more difficult long vowels and letter blends. This is explicitly taught beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through elementary school. To help reinforce these phonics, you can purchase many grade level phonics workbooks at stores such as Wal-Mart, CVS and especially on line.

When listening to your child read, as they come to a word they don’t know, ask them:

What sound does it begin with? Can you read the other words in the sentence and figure out what the word should be? Does the vowel make a short sound or a long sound? Give them a few seconds to work on it before you tell them the word.

**Fluency:**

Practice high frequency words:

-Use the word lists provided in the homework folder to make flash cards. Do week 1 words first, Practice reading the words automatically for 5 min. a day. As you child masters a word, you can eliminate it and add another word from the next list. Keep replacing mastered words with new words.

Make it fun for them; create a sticker chart to celebrate their progress.

-Little Decodable Books. Have your child read these out loud to you over and over. The more they practice the better. Memorizing is actually a good way for them to recognize words.

**Comprehension:** As they read to you, stop once in a while to ask questions about the text they just read, for example:

Who is the main character?

What happened in the beginning of the story?

Is there a problem?

What was the solution to the problem?

How does the story end?