



Putting on a Show

Reader's Theatre and poetry performances at home

Audience: Parents & Caregivers

Based on professional development by Dr. Chase Young | LiTerrific.com

Why Performance Builds Readers

When children prepare to read aloud for an audience, something powerful happens: they *want* to re-read. They practice not because they were told to, but because they don't want to stumble during the show. This is Reader's Theatre, and research shows it's one of the most effective ways to build reading fluency.

No costumes. No memorization. No stage needed. Just scripts, practice, and an audience, even if it's just the family pet.

Reader's Theatre at Home

Finding Scripts

Search "free Reader's Theatre scripts" online, or make your own by rewriting a favorite story into dialogue. Many children's books have enough dialogue to work as-is.

- thebestclass.org has free scripts
- Nursery rhymes work great for younger children
- Short stories can be adapted by splitting narration into parts

A Simple Weekly Schedule

Day	Activity	Time
Day 1	Read through the script together. Assign parts.	10 min
Day 2	Practice reading parts. Help with tricky words.	10 min
Day 3	Focus on expression. How would this character sound?	10 min
Day 4	Full run-through. Add simple staging (stand here, face there).	15 min
Day 5	Perform! Invite family, video call grandparents, or record it.	15 min

Poetry at Home

Poetry Slams

Let your child choose a poem they love (funny poems work great). Practice for a few days, then host a living room poetry slam. Dim the lights, snap instead of clap, and let them perform.

Try this starter: "*Cockroach sandwich for my lunch, hate the taste but love the crunch!*"

Silly Sentences & Chants

Choral reading works great with silly, rhythmic text. Try reading together in unison: "*Cinnamon, aluminum, linoleum*" three times fast. Children love the challenge and the silliness, and it builds fluency at the same time.

Teddy Talks

Help your child research 3-5 fun facts about something they love (weird animals, strange laws, sports records). They prepare a short talk and present it to the family. It's reading practice disguised as show-and-tell.

Fun fact examples: "In Blythe, California, you're only permitted to wear cowboy boots if you own at least two cows." "It's illegal to eat trash in some states."

Tips for a Great Home Performance

- Be an enthusiastic audience. Clap, cheer, ask for an encore
 - Record performances so your child can watch themselves improve
 - Invite extended family to watch in person or over video call
 - Let your child pick the material. Ownership = motivation
 - Perform with them. Parents reading dramatically is modeling at its best
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