

“Read” a Picture*

We can get lots of *information* from the pictures we see in ads, signs, books, billboards, and television. Often children don’t know the names for things they see. Naming things in pictures is a great way to *build vocabulary*.

Children enjoy being asked what they think about what they see. Just listen to their ideas, whether they are reasonable or not. It helps them *develop* thinking and observation skills.

Here are some ways to do it:

- 1) When you open a book with pictures, have your children *look first* at the pictures before you read. Ask them to tell you what they see. Sometimes you can explore a whole book through pictures. Here are some ways you could ask questions:
 What do you see here? What might this story be about? What is happening here?
 What can you tell about characters from looking at their face or posture? Are they happy or sad?
 Angry or calm? Would you like to be in this picture? **OR**
- 2) Take a food wrapper that has a picture or illustration – like a bag from a fast-food restaurant, or a macaroni box, a canned good, or a cereal box. Ask the children what they see in the picture or on the box. Ask them to *name the things* in the picture on the box. Does the picture make you want to eat what’s inside? What colors are used in the picture? Does this look like our house or our family?

Then *compare* several different labels or boxes. Which boxes are most attractive? Which do you like best? See if there are people or animals in the pictures. Are those people smiling? See if there are plants in the pictures. How are the pictures the same? How are they different? What color is the lettering? Can you tell what’s inside without reading the words? What would you put on a box? **OR**

- 3) Look out a window, any window, with a child. Pretend that what you see is a picture in a frame. Ask them to name 15 things they see out that window. This simple activity develops *attention to detail* and can help them in their own drawing or writing. You or the child might like to make a list of all you see and put it in the **Adventures** section of your **WAY TO GO!** FAMILY LEARNING JOURNAL™ because this activity can be a learning adventure in seeing and observing.



“When I ask my grandkids questions about what they see in a picture, they *reveal* what’s going on in their *thoughts*. I’m surprised at how wise kids really are!”

— *Grandma Anna*

*“Read” a Picture supports the English-Language Arts Content Standards related to developing reading comprehension through interpreting visual information.

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