

Classrooms Should Be A Place For Reading

(NAPSA)—While most parents take a dedicated interest in their children’s schooling, particularly the first few grades, many may not be aware of what is considered proper curriculum—and whether their children’s schools are teaching at an appropriate level.

This can be especially important in terms of reading, where American schools lag behind their foreign counterparts—and the country’s literacy rate continues to suffer.

For example, in effective first grade classrooms, you should see reading instruction that focuses on:

- **Developing talking and listening abilities.** The teacher should help children use language that is appropriate for different audiences and purposes.

- **Teaching about the alphabet.** The teacher should make sure that children can recognize and name all of the letters of the alphabet. The children should be able to quickly name the letters of the alphabet in order and recognize all the letters.

- **Teaching phonemic awareness.** The teacher should provide explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, which involves knowing the specific sounds that each letter makes.

- **Teaching phonics and word recognition.** The teacher should explicitly teach the children letter-sound relationships in a clear and useful sequence. The teachers should also teach “irregular” words that they will see and read often, but that do not follow the letter-sound relationships they are learning.

- **Developing spelling and writing.** The teacher should pro-



To build comprehension, children should read aloud and show they understand what they’re reading.

vide opportunities for children to practice writing skills independently in both whole group and learning center settings.

- **Building vocabulary and knowledge of the world.** The teacher should talk with children about important new vocabulary words and help them relate the new words to their own knowledge and experience.

- **Building comprehension.** The teacher should read aloud to the children often, and discuss books with them before, during and after reading.

This information was taken from *A Child Becomes a Reader*, a booklet provided by the Partnership for Reading. This booklet is just one of many tools and resources available for first grade classrooms as well as other grades.

For more information on these issues and other discussions of scientifically based reading research, visit the Partnership for Reading’s Web site at www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading.