

TIPS FROM VOLUNTEERS

We know it can be a little daunting getting started on your volunteering journey so we've tapped into our best resource—our seasoned volunteers—and asked them for their tips for getting the most from their reading sessions.

In the first few sessions, as you try and establish a rapport with your student, **think about the types of questions you might ask them in order to get to know them better**—and how you might ask them. During initial sessions, for example, I asked my student some general questions (such as whether he had brothers and/or sisters, any pets, or a favorite sport) and took some notes to refer back to in later sessions.

Sometimes, when I sense the little boy I'm reading with is a little bit tired because we read on Fridays, or if there's a lot of noise around us, **I take a story from a much higher reading level and read it to him.** I know he's really interested in space - he loves anything about rockets - so when I'm looking through the higher levels, I can pick the stories with a space theme that he might find really interesting. He just sits and listens.

Every time I finish a session with a child, **I always do a little comprehension quiz at the end because it's so easy for them just to follow the words and not necessarily understand them.** We will go over what new words they have learned today and what they liked about the story. It's good to ask them to tell you in their own words what happened in the story.

I would again say just how fantastic the Chapter One platform is. **There's a practice session that's absolutely golden. It's also good to make sure that you've been through all the different games to know how they work.** And then once you've started reading with your student, try and remember what it is they enjoy reading and ask them for their thoughts. Do they like the look of this story, or of that story? I try and find a happy medium between directing my student and being led by her.

I know **it's mandatory, but do the training provided by Chapter One!** And revisit time and again. There are things that I had forgotten and areas that I continually try to improve upon as a tutor, for example, what positive reinforcement sounds like and when is the right time to step in? How long should your student try to pronounce a word or respond when checking their comprehension?

As a tutor, you do have a sense of responsibility and of course, you want the child to do well. But **it's ultimately about being patient - both with yourself as well as your child.** I was a little nervous initially but I soon got the hang of it, and anyone can make an impact, particularly when you keep the purpose of the program in the front of your mind.

It all starts with literacy.