

# My child seems to be memorizing his stories. Should I cover up the pictures?

As your child begins to read his first stories it may seem that he is memorizing the text. You may notice that your child scans the pictures and dictates the text without really focusing on the words. The process of using “picture language” to help problem solve text is an important reading skill. Don’t discourage this achievement by covering up the pictures as your child reads. Rather, know that reading the picture in a story is a normal first step that many good readers take in learning to read.

Kindergarten teachers here at Roosevelt know that choosing books that have pictures, which strongly support the text, is important. Using pictures to help to make meaning out of text is an important skill for beginning readers. When a beginning reader gets stuck on a word, it is often the picture on the page that gives him his first clue and helps him to figure out the word.



Sometimes a child will focus entirely on the pictures and invent or make-up the text. You can help your child move from using pictures to invent a story to using pictures as a clue to help him to figure out the text. Encourage your child to point with his finger on each word as he reads them. This skill is called one-to-one matching and it is an important skill for your child to learn. Pointing one-to-one helps your child to focus on words. It helps your child to see that words are separated by spaces and that individual words are read in a sequence that forms a meaningful sentence. Pointing also helps your child to notice such things as capitals, punctuation, letters and letter combinations and how they relate to sounds. Both pointing one-to-one and using pictures as a visual clue are important steps towards your child’s learning to self-monitor his reading in order to becoming a more independent reader.