

Get in Shape for Reading

FLJ, Sept. 2014, John T. McMahan III

Shaping in education is a paradigm of mine that has many amalgamations within the educational realm. **Shaping** in education is a setting of defined goals, whether it is in the home, classroom, building or school district and diligently executing a given plan in a decisive manner. One of the hardest things to do in **shaping** is getting buy in from the constituents that it involves. This aggregation may include parents, students, administrators, teachers and classified employees. This 3 “D” central mechanism of **shaping** is one that keeps the paradigm tight and clearly focused. Each member of the aggregation may have a different philosophy on how this **shaping** paradigm should look.

I want to initially talk about **shaping** at home with your child with regards to reading literacy. **Shaping** at home in the reading realm may be a great way to help set up a regiment that might be more easily met in everyone’s busy life. One example may be that I am going to read 10 pages of a book to or with my child, every night before my child goes to bed. Going along with that, you may decide that you are going to read those pages while your child is drifting off to sleep or you may read to them just before dinner. **Shaping** this behavior will create the reading time as part of the day which becomes habitual. Another way to **shape** the behavior is to alternate the reading activity, day to day while keeping a consistent time. This will allow you to create a sense of urgency for reading time and ultimately make it a time that if you happen to be late doing it or may miss it all together, your child will wonder why you are not reading because it has become an everyday routine, like taking a bath.

Shaping’s first “D” is simply defining the goal. In reading literacy at home with your child, you define that reading with and to your child is going to be a priority and somehow it is going to happen within your busy schedule. The second “D” is being decisive and that you are going to read every day and figure out how it will look within your busy everyday schedule. This will take some organization to figure out when is the best time for you and your child to read within your specialized family schedule. Many mothers are single mothers and their time is stretched thinly between work, home and possibly school. Grandparents often play a huge role in the shared, raising of a child and can play an active place in the reading opportunities with your child. Extended family may play a role in the raising of the child and they may offer opportunities for reading moments. The third “D” in my **shaping** paradigm is being diligent. When you have made the decision to read to your child and you have coordinated and organized the time to do it, make sure you carry out the plan and make it an everyday part of your life. If you are diligent reading to your child or with them, their educational maturation will grow and as they get

closer to their first year of pre-school, they may go into that first year of class ahead of the game and their peers.

This is just one small example of **Shaping** in education but when we are talking about reading literacy, is there anything more important we can do for our child?