

Reading

An information booklet for Parents



Reading at Home

We know how important it is for teachers and parents to work together to give your child the best start. We believe that parents play a vital role in helping their child learn to read. Reading together at home is one of the easiest but most important ways in which you can help your child. As you share books you are helping improve your child's reading skills and also showing them how important and enjoyable reading is. This booklet is a short guide to help you.

Supporting Reading at Home

Don't just read books. Encourage your child to read newspapers, TV guides, comics and magazines. Ask your child to find out information from the Yellow Pages, the Internet, cookery books, etc.

1. Find a place to sit together that suits you both

2. **Make time to read.** Try to read for at least 5 to 10 minutes a day and once over the weekend. Encourage independent reading but don't be afraid to still tell a bedtime story.

3. Find some time to talk about the book as well as reading it.

Start with the title, look at the cover and briefly chat about what you might find inside.

Allow plenty of time for discussion before you turn over a page. A valuable question is:

"What do you think will happen next?"

If your child gets stuck, ask what word would fit best, ask them to sound it out (if appropriate), or simply supply the word yourself. What happened in the story? Does this remind them of anything in their lives or anything they have read before?

Did they think the book was funny? Did they spot any interesting words and phrases? Did they enjoy the book?

4. Read to your child. You can help your child to understand the emphasis of particular parts of the story.

5. Encourage your child to retell the story you have just shared. This will give you an idea of how much they have understood.

6. Do not condemn the book as 'too easy' or 'too hard'. Children need a range of reading materials. Any 'easy' book helps them to relax with reading. A difficult book can be read to your child. Both are important.

7. If your child misreads a word without changing the meaning, e.g. 'Dad' for 'Father', accept it. If they hesitate, repeat a word or leave one out, say nothing provided the meaning is not lost. If they say a word which does change the meaning, or they are simply stuck, you can help them by:

a. Pointing to the picture if it is relevant

b. Asking a question to remind them of the context, e.g. 'Where did they say they were going?'

c. Re-reading the sentence up to the unknown word to remind them of the context

- d. Saying or pointing to the first letter of the word
- e. Telling your child the word to avoid losing momentum.
- f. If the word can be read easily by sounding out the letters, encourage them or help them to do this.



PAUSE to help them work out the new words

PROMPT by using some of the techniques mentioned

PRAISE

The best kind of praise is that which tells the child exactly what has pleased you. For example:

I liked the way that you checked the pictures for clues.

I liked the way that you realised that didn't make sense and checked again.

I liked the way you made that sound like a question.

I liked the way that you covered part of the word and read it a bit at a time.

I liked the way that you didn't give up.

After Reading

Talking about the book with your child at the end will help your child in their enjoyment and understanding of the book.

- Did you enjoy that book? Why? Why not?
- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Which part did you like the best? Why?
- Was there any part you didn't like? Why?
- Would you choose this book/story again?

My child is a fluent reader. Can I still help?

YES! Although children will often want to read in their heads when they become fluent readers and you should not insist on too much reading aloud, there are still many things that you can do.

Discuss with them what they have read - about the character, about the plot, about the important parts of the story, about what they have learnt from the information, about their feelings as they read the story... For example;

- Which part of the story did you like best? Why?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Would you like X as a friend? Why?
- What do you think X should have done when..?
- How do you think the story will end?
- Was the information detailed enough?

Encourage them to think about the way the book has been written; the print, the layout and the illustrations.

- **Visit your library** - it's free to join! Help your child to choose books.



READING ALOUD

Make the story come to life. All children, regardless of ability, will benefit from reading to someone. This will help them read more fluently with expression in order to keep the listener's attention.

What can I do to help my child at Reception, Year 1 and 2?

- As well as reading aloud to someone who is listening carefully and giving help where needed, children need to talk about the book and be read to themselves.
- Try to take a regular time as often as you can to read and enjoy books.
- You could read a book to your child and get him/ her to join in when he/she can. Children can do this best with rhymes and repeating patterns of words and at the end of sentences.
- Re-read books that are familiar to your child:
 - i) They enjoy and get satisfaction from re-reading good books. This helps to turn them on to reading and gives them confidence.
 - ii) When they know most of the words, they can then turn their attention to reading fluently and with expression
 - iii) Children can read on their own without having to wait for someone to help them. This means they can do more reading which helps them to become better readers.
 - iv) When children know most of the words, they can learn about common letter strings, about forming new words from the ones they already know and about similarities and differences between words.
 - Recorded books are excellent, as they can let your child experience books that he/she couldn't manage on his/her own.
 - Check your child really understands the book by asking them to relate the story to you.
 - When your child reads and gets a word wrong, allow them to complete the sentence before correcting them. Children can often work out the 'difficult' word by understanding the rest of the sentence. You can also help your child to break down 'difficult' words into parts that they recognise.

What can I do to help my child at Years 3 and 4?

- If your child has not yet joined the local library and you can get to it, now is the time to join. Children need to widen their reading and to use and browse through non-fiction.
- They need to be encouraged to read stories, poetry, plays and all kinds of information.
- They also need to be able to choose the kinds of books that they enjoy. It is at around this age that children can get hooked on to a particular writer or type of book.

- There is evidence that by the time they are in Year 4, some boys may be losing interest in reading and not doing as well as girls. Some boys are more tuned into magazines, information texts of all kinds and comics. They need opportunities for this kind of reading at home.
- Libraries do an excellent job, but there is nothing like owning your own books. Having books of your own that you can go back to, talk about and swap with a friend, collect and treasure is really important. It can make a big difference to reading progress.
- Your child might benefit from reading to younger children. This gives him/her the chance to read fluently with expression in order to keep the listener's attention. Fond grandparents are good listeners and readers too.
- Check your child really understands the book by asking them to relate the story to you. Allow your child to reread favourite stories. This will encourage them to recognise patterns in the story and new words.
- When your child reads and gets a word wrong, allow them to complete the sentence before correcting them. Children can often work out the 'difficult word' by understanding the rest of the sentence. You can also help your child to break down 'difficult' words into parts that they recognise.

Ask lots of questions about the story. What would you have done if you were.....? Does this book remind you of any thing that has happened to you? Can you guess what is going to happen next?

Use a dictionary. Buy a simple dictionary and use it to check the meanings of new words.

What can I do to help my child at Years 5 and 6?

Through Years 5 and 6, children will still benefit from your help and interest. Confident readers have reached the stage where they no longer wish to read to an adult and want to read silently to themselves. The interaction between the parent and child changes at this stage. To ensure that the child's reading development continues to move forward, we would encourage parents to question the child about what they are reading, at an appropriate time, to extend their reading and share their enjoyment of the book.

How can I help when my child wants to read silently?

If your child prefers to read silently, particularly as they read longer stories, just chat about their views of the story or ask questions about the book. (see questions below) Continue to show that you are interested in their choice but respect their growing independence as readers. It is important however, to continue to read aloud to your child, whatever their stage of reading development.

The following questions will provide ideas that you can extend to suit individual needs.

Questions to ask...

What is the title of the book?

What kind of book is it? (Fiction, non fiction, poetry, short story etc)

Who is the author/illustrator?

Have you read any other books by the same author?

What made you choose this book? (Author, cover, illustration, recommendation etc)

Did you read the blurb before selecting the book?

Could you tell anything about the book before you started reading it? What were the clues?

Questions to ask before your child begins or resumes their book...

What has happened so far?

What do you think will happen next?

What are the clues that make you think this?

How would you like the story to end?

Are you involved in the story? Why?

Where is the story set? Is there a description?

When is the story set? (Past, present, future)

Who are the characters in the story? Who do you like/dislike? Why?

Do you feel similar to any of the characters? Tell me what is similar?

Questions to ask when your child has finished their book...

Was the book as you expected?

Was there anything you disliked about the story?

At what point did you decide you liked/disliked the story?

If you have read this book before, did you enjoy it more this time?

Did you notice anything special about the way language is used in this book? (dialect, descriptive writing etc)

If you had written this book, how would you have made it better?

Has anything that happens in this book ever happened to you?

Can you describe an exciting moment or favourite part of the story?

Is the story straightforward? Is there more than one story happening at the same time?

Who was telling the story?

Was this the most important character in the story?

Do we get to know the characters quickly or do they build up slowly through the book?

Was the ending as you expected? Did you like the way the story ended?

Do you like the illustrations? Do you have a favourite?

Would you recommend this book to your friends? Tell me what you would say to a friend?

WHAT DO I WRITE IN THE READING RECORD?

It is important that the Reading Record reflects the child's reading patterns. Regular comments from the parent, linked to the questions below, are also needed to show that the child is extending his/her reading through questioning and interaction with an adult.

The following list is not an exhaustive list but offers suggestions that may be appropriate.

It is very important to remember that the enjoyment factor is always worth commenting on.

Parents are not expected to comment on each of the following areas after each reading session!

- How enthusiastic is the child about the choice of book?
- Can the child remember the story so far?
- Is the child reading using only the pictures for clues?
- Does your child understand that the words they are reading mean something?
- Can the child read words out of context e.g. when you point to a word without reading the whole sentence?
- Is the child confident to attempt new words?
- What reading strategies is your child using e.g. sounds, use of the picture, use of the context?
- Can the child follow the text without using a finger or marker?
- Is there a pattern to the mistakes your child is making e.g. words ending in "ed" or starting in "sh"?
- Does the child recognise mistakes and self correct?
- Is the child recognising many key words?
- Is the child aware of punctuation?
- Is the child reading with expression?
- How long is the child able to sustain reading?

**The greatest gift you can give children
is to read to them from a very early age.**

You don't have to be an expert!

There's no magic in supporting children's reading,
just lots of patience,
time and affection, plus a little skill.

Be an actor!

Look interested.

If it's a frightening book, look scared.
If it's funny, then laugh.
If it's a mystery book, look puzzled.

Give the impression that you are happy
as long as they are doing their best.

Always end on a 'high note'.



Happy Reading