

Reading with your child at home



Mrs Athey, Mrs Fortescue and Mrs Maule



Reading is a precious gift

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Dr. Seuss

As parents you are your child's most influential teacher with a vital and incredibly important role to play in helping your child to learn to read.

Reading is probably the single most important thing you can do to help your child's education.

Here are some suggestions on how you can help to make this a positive experience.

Choose a quiet time

Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough.

Make reading enjoyable

Make reading an enjoyable experience. Try acting out stories together – this helps bring the story alive. Sit with your child. Try not to pressurise if he or she is reluctant. If your child loses interest then do something else.

Maintain the flow

If your child mispronounces a word do not interrupt immediately. Instead allow opportunity for self-correction. It is better to tell a child some unknown words to maintain the flow rather than insisting on trying to build them all up from the sounds of the letters. If your child does try to 'sound out' words, encourage the use of letter sounds rather than 'alphabet names'.

Be positive

If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Don't say 'No. That's wrong,' but 'Let's read it together' and point to the words as you say them. Boost your child's confidence with constant praise for even the smallest achievement.

Success is the key

In order to build up children's confidence in reading we must ensure that they are reading the right level of book. Remember 'Nothing succeeds like success'. Struggling with a book with many unknown words is pointless. Flow is lost, text cannot be understood and children can easily become reluctant readers.

Visit the Library

Encourage your child to use the public library regularly. This provides an alternative reading environment and offers a wide range of books which will cater for all reading interests and broaden your child's reading experiences. There are often reading challenges to get involved in especially over the summer.

Regular practice

Try to read with your child on most school days. 'Little and often' is best.

Communicate

Your child has a reading record book. Please try to communicate regularly with positive comments and any concerns. Your child will then know that you are interested in their progress and that you value reading.

Talk about the books

There is more to being a good reader than just being able to read the words accurately. Just as important is being able to understand what has been read. Always talk to your child about the book; about the pictures, the characters, how they think the story will end, and their favourite part. You will then be able to see how well they have understood and you will help them to develop good comprehension skills. Just because they can read a word does not mean that they understand what it means.

Variety is important

Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials eg. picture books, hard backs, poetry, comics, joke books, magazines, poems, information books, game instructions, TV listings and menus.

There is no such thing as a child who hates to read; there are only children who have not found the right book. Frank Serafini



Further activities and strategies to help support your child's reading



3-7 year olds

1. Compare events in the books you are reading to similar events which may have happened in your own experiences. This helps children to make connections. 'Remember when.....'
2. Sing together – nursery rhymes and songs, as this helps with rhythm and patterned and repeated language.
3. Use phonics to help your child. Make sure you know the sound each letter makes and when your child moves on to digraphs (2 or 3 letters which make 1 sound – sh, ee and igh) encourage them to use these.
4. Play phonic games (high frequency word bingo, snap)
5. Use book talk – who is the author? Who is the illustrator, look at the front cover; does it give us any clues about what might happen in the story? Look at the pictures carefully as they will often give a lot more information about what is going on/how characters are feeling. Also talk about sentences, point out capital letters and full stops, speech bubbles etc.
6. Read new books but also read old favourites too. Children often enjoy hearing the same stories over and over again – they can join in with the story and it builds their confidence.

"If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all." Oscar Wilde

7-11 Year olds



1. Talk together – older children continue to need opportunities to talk about what they are reading as well as their reading interests. They may also enjoy talking to you about what you are reading.
2. Read together – There is never an age when it is not enjoyable and useful to spend ten minutes a day reading together (even with an 11 year old). There will still be many words which they come across which need explaining.
3. Revisiting favourites and memories – even if it seems like easy reading there's no mad rush to keep moving on and pushing up through levels and we all take comfort from reading old favourites. (There is always something you missed, a phrase, a

description, something which sparks a different memory). Compare and share memories from real life and books as this will help your child to develop empathy.

4. Sing together – Why Not! Rhythm, rhyme, raps, advertising jingles, latest hit song – they all help with patterns of language.

5. Making Choices – Visit book shops, libraries, Barter Books etc. Let your child browse and chat as they need to learn how to make their own choices about what they read.

7. If children want to read something they really will try if you want children to read it has to be about things that interest them. So don't choose for them choose with them.

8. Phonics and Spelling - Children will still need to use phonics to tackle new or unknown words. This also helps them to learn about spelling pattern and rules.

9. Play Games – Many games are really useful for developing skills that children need as developing readers eg. Scrabble, Boggle, Crosswords.

10. Listen to your child read – It is really important to still do this. You can check for fluency, expression, intonation. Your child will need help to understand more complex plots and vocabulary as well as building an understanding of how punctuation and grammar work.

11. Check understanding – Ask questions like, why did that happen? How does that work? Can you retell me the story/what happened in the last chapter? Explain a specific section and explore words and vocabulary/ use a dictionary.

12. Book Talk – Talk about favourite authors and illustrators, series. Talk about poetry books, fiction, non-fiction, plays, magazines and reference materials.

Other places you could find information about reading include:

The Literacy Trust

Oxford Owl

Springboard Life-changing Literacy

School and home working in partnership together create the perfect setting for encouraging a love of reading. We appreciate the commitment Parents give in helping their children to become confident readers.