



How you can support your
child at home towards
independent reading.

Reading should be FUN!

Choose your moment

Read lots and everything

Reading to your child

This is one of the most valuable things you can do to help your child become and independent reader.

Reading to a child:

- Promotes reading as an enjoyable, desirable activity.
- Provides opportunities for children to hear and see a fluent reader in action, using intonation and expression to bring the phrases and sentences to life.
- Helps children become familiar with the rhythms of written language-an ability to predict helps them be aware of book conventions, i.e. the title page, where the story begins, information about the author etc.
- Gives opportunities to talk about the language of reading in a relaxed, informative way. Introduces them to a wider variety of books.
- Gives children access to stories that match their interests but which are too difficult for them to read for themselves.

Reading is everywhere:

At an early age children often recognise brand names, labels, posters and advertisements in shops, in magazines and on television. Sharing the experience with adults and getting a positive reaction raises the status of the child and the activity.

Children will also see adults reading for particular purposes, e.g. checking the TV guide, following a recipe, reading the newspaper, using the phone book, checking a shopping list.

They are learning how we use print in everyday life. It is good to occasionally read these out loud so they see the process of reading.

Towards Independent Reading

Reading is more than just identifying/ decoding words. In order to read easily and confidently children use a range of clues. :

- The general meaning and what makes sense within the story.
- Their existing knowledge of spoken word and written language.
- The familiarity with the story or subject.
- The pictures
- Knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Recognition of whole words.

Children may use more than one of these strategies when reading a book for the first time.

What to do:

- Encourage your child to choose a variety of books to read, not those just sent home from school.
- Sit comfortably alongside your child to be supportive.
- Talk about the book before you start reading. Look at the title and the cover, what do you think this book is going to be about? Why? You could read the 'Blurb' on the back.
- Talk about the pictures first; in the beginning pictures carry much of the meaning.
- Run your finger along the line as you read together. Ask your child where they should start reading. Demonstrate going from left to right, top to bottom.
- At the bottom of one or two pages ask your child to predict what might happen next.

Use books in many different ways:

- Tell your own story with the pictures.
- Retell the story using your own words.
- Play word detective (search for certain words)
- Act out the story
- Talk about what might happen next/before.
- Read books to your child and ask them comprehension questions.
- Talk about other books that are similar and why.
- Talk about alternative endings.

What to do if your child is stuck.

If your child is struggling with a word give them thinking time to work it out. Working out how to solve a tricky word is good reading practise.

Some handy hints for when your child is stuck:

- Look at the pictures for clues.
- Break down (segment) words into sounds, e.g. c-a-t and say them together (blend) to make a word.
- Say sounds in an exaggerated way.
- Find smaller words within words, e.g. into become in to.
- Find key words they already know.
- Read ahead, then go back to find out which word might make sense.
- Think about what they already know about the story.
- Retell the story so far in own words.
- Sometimes it helps to read aloud together, pacing yourself to match the child's rate of reading.
- Change the tone of your voice towards the end of the sentence to give them a clue about the word.

- Use expression in your voice to make the reading more fun.

If your child works out the word praise their success. If you child can't work out the word praise for trying. Encourage and help your child develop a range of strategies.