



Supporting your Child with Reading in Early Years and Key Stage One

Reading is one of the most important skills your child will learn at school. This booklet has been designed to give you some ideas about how you can help your child's reading outside school. Parents and other adults can play an essential role in giving children a love of reading and an interest in books that will give them a strong foundation that we can build upon at school. This will set them up for a lifetime of pleasure from reading. It's important to remember, though, that it's not a race! For some children, learning to read will seem to happen easily and quickly. For others more time and support will be needed.

What reading skills should I be looking to develop in my child?

A good reader is not just a child who can read aloud fluently. A good reader:

- Understands what they have read.
- Can summarise what they have read.
- Can read aloud with expression.
- Can choose what they'd like to read for themselves.
- Is able to talk about what they like to read.
- Can explain their views on what they have read.

How can I help my child to enjoy reading?

Make it a 'special' time:

- No distractions (e.g. TV).
- Rewards and challenges
- Use humour at difficult moments.
- Aim to have a 'reading routine', perhaps at the same time every day.
- A little reading goes a long way! Just fifteen minutes a day can make a big difference to your child's reading ability.

Plenty of praise and encouragement.

- Say how much you enjoy listening to them read!
- Make sure that children know that you are happy as long as they are trying their best.
- Be an 'actor'! If it's a frightening book, look scared. If it's funny, then laugh. If it's a mystery book, look puzzled.
- Try to encourage enjoyment and fluency without concentrating too much on errors.
- Always end on a 'high note'.

Be seen reading!

- Seeing you read will inspire your child to read too!

Give your child a wide array of reading material. e.g. magazines, newspapers, comics and fiction books.

- Put these in cars, bathrooms, bedrooms, family rooms, and even by the TV.
- Take trips to the library every few weeks to choose new books.

How do I help my child to choose a new book?

Go for what they're interested in!

Sports? Music? Dinosaurs? Choose books that relate to an interest your child has. Your child won't want to read the book otherwise!

Don't just encourage your child to read fiction books

It is important that your child reads other types of writing from 'real life' as well, for example newspapers, recipes, encyclopaedias and adverts. Some children prefer non fiction books, although they should also be encouraged to read fiction.

If your child has to stop a number of times in a sentence to work out what words say, the book may be too difficult for them. However, don't discount the book completely—you can always read it to them!

However, always go for interest and enjoyment over level.

You can always read the book to them if they get stuck!

If they genuinely do not enjoy the book, change it.

There is no need to labour to the end! Discuss why they didn't enjoy the book.

How do I introduce a new book?

Start with the title and look at the cover.

What might the book be about?

- Go through words they might find tricky in the book to boost their confidence.
- At the bottom of each page, encourage your child to predict what will happen next.

How do I make reading fun?

Reading sessions should be fun and enjoyable, not 'a chore'.

- Play 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' with reading questions. For each question, they have four possible answers. If they are not sure, they can have options such as '50/50' or 'phone a friend'.
- Reinforce language skills by doing puzzles and playing games that reinforce literacy, such as Lotto, Happy Families, Concentration and Scrabble.

What should I do if my child makes a mistake when reading to me?

If what he or she reads still makes sense:

Let him / her continue on until there is a sensible break (e.g. end of sentence, paragraph or page).

Say something like, —"You read that really well and it made sense, but lets look at that word again. You said ***. Check it again."

If it made no sense:

Stop straight away.

Say: —"You're doing well, but that doesn't make sense. What sort of clues will help us work out the word?"

What should I do if my child gets stuck on a word?

- Break down the word into chunks (syllables) – chimp-an-zee
- Read to the end of the sentence: this way, they will not lose the flow of what they are reading. Then, go back and look at the word again.
- Think about other words which look similar.
- Use illustrations as clues.
- Explain what the word means.
- After a reading session, go back to the tricky word. Can your child remember what the word said?
- In some cases, it may be necessary to tell your child the word so that they don't lose the flow of what they are reading.

When we are reading together should my child always be doing the reading aloud?

Reading aloud to children is important, no matter their age! Listening to a story allows children to concentrate on the 'message' rather than purely what the words 'say'.

'Shadow read' – sometimes it may be useful to read quietly alongside your child, so that if they stumble over a word, they can fall back on you.

My child struggles to read aloud and we seem to spend more time battling over the words rather than discussing what they've read.

Check with your child's teacher. They will be able to tell you if the book is a little hard for them.

It is important that children 'hear' stories being read to them as well. This could be you reading to them, or listening to a story tape or CD. You can then discuss what you have heard.

Picture books

Picture books aren't just for early readers! These can be useful to discuss how a character is feeling. Look for clues in the picture that tell you how the character is feeling.

When I ask my child about what they have read, they use the illustrations to help them. Should I cover up the illustration?

Looking at pictures can help enrich a child's understanding of a book. Rather than cover up the illustrations, use them to discuss what they think will happen next.

My child doesn't pause when they get to a full stop. What can I do to help them?

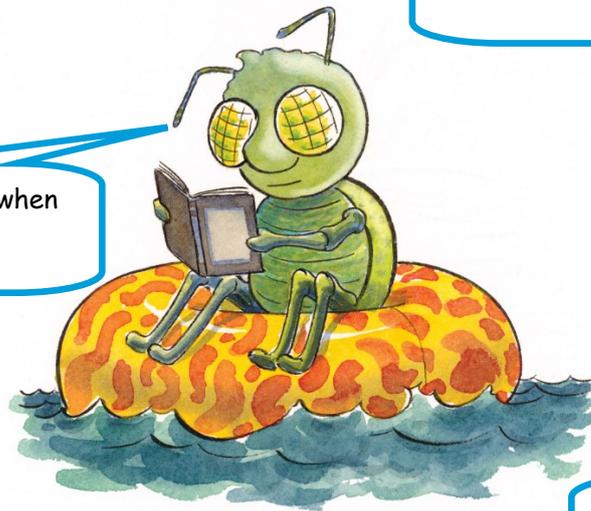
Have a signal for the end of the sentence, e.g. the child has to clap, purse their lips or punch the air when they get to a full stop.

Remember...

It's not a race!

If you're not sure, ask your child's teacher.

Give your child lots of praise when they are trying hard!



Give your child time to think about an answer.

It's not a test! If your child gets stuck, you can help!

