Reading with Children

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Introduction

As a parent or carer you are the person who knows your child best, so you are ideally placed to help them with reading. This booklet is written to help answer questions you may have about reading and learning to read and to give you ideas for helping with reading at home.

Everywhere you go there are many opportunities to read - whether you are shopping, sitting in the café, waiting for a train or a bus. There are lots of fun ways to improve reading without children even realising they are learning. By pointing out words all around you, you will be making them aware of how important reading and literacy are.
What can you do to help your child with their reading?

Even though school is teaching your child how to read, parents and carers still have an important role to play.

You can help with reading by showing how important it is and by finding ways to help your child enjoy reading.

Some ideas to help improve your child’s reading:

- Spend 10 minutes a day reading together. Make it fun - choose books you both enjoy. Talk about the pictures and characters and make up your own stories.

- Buy books as presents. Make a special place to keep reading books from school, books borrowed from the library and books bought as presents. It will show how important reading is to you.

- Look at brochures and catalogues together.

- Look at newspapers together and point out more unusual words.

- Make a word box and put in new words your child has learnt. Let your child see you reading and talk about what you like and don’t like about reading.

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Learning to read

There are lots of simple activities you can do to help your child get the best start to their education and to support their learning at school.

Some ideas to help your child learn to read:-

Ask your child to spot letters they recognise (such as the first letter of their name) in words. Encourage your child to read the words on food packets when you are unpacking shopping or cooking.

Spend 10 minutes a day reading a book together or talking about pictures and making up your own story.

Sing nursery rhymes and songs together.

Put books in your child’s toy box.

Create a collage of the alphabet together by cutting up old newspapers and magazines.

Label familiar objects around the house with post it notes or signs.

Have a longer reading session together. Encourage your child to choose a selection of their favourite books. You could use a story tape.

Create ‘My Book about Everything’ with your child. It will get bigger as they do. Include photographs of the family, ‘colour pages’ on which you stick pictures of one colour cut out of magazines, your child’s drawings and so on.

Read to your child at bedtime.
Other useful information

Children often learn stories off by heart so that they seem to ‘read’ a book. This is normal and means your child is well on the way to becoming a reader. It shows they understand the connection between the words in print and the story.

Children will often want to read the same book over and over again. This shows that they are enjoying the book and getting real pleasure from reading. To encourage them to move on to different books, you could read the favourite book and then read one of your favourites, too.

Tips for hearing children read

Use praise every time your child reads, even if they don’t say everything right first time. A ‘well done’ is very motivating. Following a ‘pause, prompt, praise’ approach helps - wait before you correct a mistake so that your child has a chance to say it right themselves, if not, then give your child clues to help them say the word right. Finally praise them if they say the word right or even try to!

Wait until the end of a line before correcting mistakes when you are reading together. This will give time for self-correction. If your child doesn’t know a word, ask them to guess what it means from the other words around, or say ‘something’ instead and go back later to work out the word.
Learning at Home

Learning at home can be fun and will make a real difference to how well your child will do at school.

Some ideas for home:-

Spend 10 minutes reading together. Ask your child to retell a favourite picture book in their own words.

Encourage your child to make up plays. When a friend comes round they could put on a show for you.

Let your child choose books that they want to read.

Buy books as presents as well as toys, and encourage friends and relatives to do the same. Use pop-up or lift-the-flap books to gain the interest of even the most reluctant readers.

Praise is really important in helping encourage a child to read. Some children need lots of practice and encouragement.

A word you will hear from school when children are learning to read is ‘phonics’. This means the letter and letter combination sounds rather than the letter names.

All children learn differently. Some children need to slow down when they read, as they may be good at spotting the first letter of words and then guessing what the word says. Others need to worry less about mistakes and read all the way through the story.

If your child is finding it difficult, encourage them to sound out the word and use clues in the story to help them guess what the word is. Pictures can help give clues to words as well. Part of learning to be a better reader is being able to guess what new words mean and how they sound.

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Moving on to different stages

Once your child has learnt to read, there are lots of activities you can do to help them become confident, independent readers who read books, magazines, comics and newspapers for pleasure.

Some ideas for home to help confidence and independence:-

Continue to listen to your child read. A good 10 minutes is better than a distracted, difficult 30 minutes.

Find books about subjects your child likes. E.g.. Dinosaurs, space or maybe T.V. tie-ins.

Take books with you when you go on a journey or shopping trip to help pass the time.

Read a match report for your team together.

Stick a map of the world on the wall and stick pins in the map to show where books and stories are set.

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Supporting confident readers

Once children have learnt the mechanics of reading (the ‘how to’), there is a lot parents and carers can do to help children enjoy reading. It is very important for children to see reading as something they can do in their spare time for fun, as well as a tool they need to help them at school.

Some ideas for helping older children at home:-

Use a local library.

Show an interest in the books your child brings home from school. This will remind them that reading is important to you.

Older children can read to younger brothers and sisters - this will make them feel like the ‘expert’ and encourage your younger child to read as well.

Go through T.V. listings guide together to choose what you want to watch.

Play categories - write lists of different groups of things, for example, cartoon characters.

Encourage your child to keep a record of books they have read, perhaps giving a star rating or drawing a picture or write something about the book. It is important not to make this seem like school work.

Share taped stories of books. Encourage your child to write e-mails to friends.
Supporting confident readers

Don’t forget confident readers still enjoy being read to. You could also read your own childhood favourites together (don’t be offended if they don’t enjoy them as much as you!).

It is important to let children choose what they want to read - after all adults don’t like to be told what they can and can’t read. The Key Stage 1 list of ‘Good Reads’ is a good resource for choosing different books to read.

Research shows that as long as children read for pleasure their education benefits.

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Supporting phonics learning at home

Early Reading Skills through Phonics

- Using initial sounds to help recognise words
- Knowing each letter has a name and a sound
- Looking at the pictures for clues
- Reading the other words in the sentence and then deciding on one that makes sense

Again, these skills are worked on every day in school and some of these will be sent home for parents to work on.

Reading Skills for Foundation Stage and Year 1

Building up Consonant Vowel Consonant (CVC) words

- Knowing the alphabet
- Initial blends
- Long vowel sounds
- Breaking down words and looking for words within words
- Begin to read with some expression
- Begin to develop basic comprehension skills
- Being able to apply skills to a variety of texts and not just the school reading scheme
- Simple alphabetical order
Supporting phonics learning at home

Children will have opportunities to read every day at school. It will not necessarily be their school reading book. They will also participate in group and shared reading during the week.

Within each year group through school, children will read a variety of texts including the following:

- Stories
- Labels and captions
- Poetry books
- Myths and Legends
- Playscripts
- Reports
- Letters
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Information books
- Instructions
- Explanations
- Biographies and autobiographies
- Persuasive writing

They will study the different features, layout and styles of these texts, according to the year group. Each text type is read and studied during literacy and activities completed relating to the text. This is all in addition to their school reading books.

Reading is about enjoying a variety of books and applying skills learnt to all the different genres. The school reading scheme is only a small part of children’s reading development in our school and should only be used as a guide.

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Useful Websites

Following are a list of Websites you may find useful:

- www.booktrust.org.uk
- www.bookstart.co.uk
- www.literacytrust.org.uk
- www.amazon.co.uk
- www.redhouse.co.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc
- www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies
- www.roalddahl.com
- www.poetry4kids.com
- www.phonicsplay.co.uk
- www.lettersandsounds.co.uk
- www.wordsforlife.org.uk

Useful Apps

Collins Big Cat Books apps: http://collinsbigcat.com/apps


ABC Magnetic Alphabet Lite: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/abc-magnetic-alphabet-lite/id389132393?mt=8

Mr Icky Fox: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/the-icky-mr-fox/id543046969?mt=8


Mr Thorne: http://www.mrthorne.com/ipad/
Recommended Books (4 upwards)

I Hate School, by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross (Anderson Press)
Honor Brown hates school, the worms the dinner ladies feed them, the smelly sand-pit, the killer sharks in the water tray. But what do you know? Come the end of year six, she is in tears at the thought of leaving. For all who are starting school this week, and for their parents who need a laugh.

Bunny Cakes by Rosemary Wells (Picture Corgi)
It is impossible not to fall in love with Max the tearaway toddler rabbit who gives his rather bossy big sister Ruby a pretty hard time. Max causes mayhem in the kitchen when Ruby decides to make a cake for grandma's birthday, and gets to have his cake and eat it in the shape of red hot marshmallow squirters for his earthworm surprise cake. It is very simple, smart and sassy and the shopping lists get even the very young reading.

Owl Babies by Martin Waddell, illustrated by Patrick Benson (Walker)
Dealing in a really imaginative way with the idea of separation from the mum you really love, this is a wonderful book that makes you feel cozy just to think about it. Benson's illustrations have a wonderful expressive quality.

A Squash and a Squeeze by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Axel Scheffler (Mammoth)
Endearingly dotty version of old English folk tale about a woman who thinks that her house is too small, and so it proves when the farmyard animals turn up. The text is simple and silly and the illustrations capture the sense of ordinary life gone mad.

The Big Big Sea by Martin Waddell, illustrated by Jennifer Eachus (Walker)
One of those intensely magical books in which words and pictures come together to create a portrait of the world that is just a little bit different. It is a book about the importance of the very smallest things in life. A little picture book with a big wild heart.

My Uncle is a Hunkle Says Clarice by Lauren Child (Orchard)
Lauren Child has burst exuberantly upon children's publishing with her funny daffy stories about Clarice Bean, a small girl who is eight going on eighty-eight and who lives in a very modern household that is always in uproar. The latest has a ticklish title and is a ticklish book with Child's trademark hurdy gurdy mixture of drawings, photos and clever typography - the words for driving to the hospital very fast are very squiggly. Other delicious titles include Clarice Bean, That's Me and I Will Not Never Eat a Tomato.

The It-Doesn't Matter Suit by Sylvia Plath (Faber)
Only it matters a lot to Max, youngest of seven brothers residing in the town of Winkelburg, that he is the only member of his family that hasn't got a suit. But when a mysterious parcel arrives and it turns out to be a mustard yellow suit, Max is the last in line for a particularly special hand-me-down. Plath's book has a charming, dead-pan humour that is matched by Rotraut Susanne Berner's illustrations.

The Sea-Thing Child by Russell Hoban, illustrated by Patrick Benson
Russell Hoban's superb 30-year-old classic about the terrible power of nature seen through the sea and shoreline and the eyes of the sea-thing child as he grows in experience and confidence. Patrick Benson's paintings marvellously capture the immensity of the sea and sky.

Josie Smith in Summer by Magdalen Nabb (Collins)
One in a jolly little series of nine books that tell of the adventures of the irrepressible Josie, her family and friends. These books are not stunningly well-written or even particularly perceptive, but their charm is in their depiction of everyday life, the perils and pleasures of friendship, the cares and concerns of Josie and her quirky view of adult behaviour. Child-sized in every way and all the better for it, these are books for readers going solo for the first time.

Rosie's Babies by Martin Waddell and Penny Dale (Walker)
There are enchanting, highly detailed pastel pictures to accompany this story about four-year-old Rosie, trying to get her mum's attention while she puts the baby to bed. Rosie tells her own stories about her babies, bear and rabbit: how they make her cross, what she gives them to eat - apples, pears and grapes (but they do not like the pips). This is a great insight into the egocentric world of the small child and a gentle and sympathetic account of sibling rivalry.

Dogger by Shirley Hughes (Collins)
A good story told with empathy for what it feels like to lose your favourite teddy - or, in this case, Dogger, a worn old dog that belongs to Dave. When Dave loses him at the school fete he only gets him back because of a generous gesture by his big sister, Bella.
The Mousehole Cat by Antonia Barber and Nicola Bayley (Walker)
An utterly magical picture book with rich, vividly coloured illustrations, friezes and borders that complement Barber’s simple, almost severe telling of the dramatic Cornish legend of Mowser the Cat and Tom, the old fisherman, who brave the fury of the Great Storm Cat to save their village from starving.

The Children of Lir by Shelia MacGill-Callahan (Ragged Bears)
What are almost pre-Raphaelite pictures accompany this retelling of the legend of the children of the king of Ireland who are turned into swans by their wicked stepmother. Writing and visuals set each other off to create a rich story about the making and breaking of spells and the sorrow of exile. A book for sharing.

The Snowman by Raymond Briggs (Penguin)
A classic story, told entirely without words, of the magical friendship between a boy and his frozen friend. Actually much improved by not having to listen to Walking On Air while watching the story unfold. If you like this, try The Bear - much the same except that the friend is furry.

Poems For the Very Young selected by Michael Rosen (Kingfisher)
An excellent collection to suit all tastes. Worth it alone for Jack Prelutsky's Spaghetti! Spaghetti! - the kind of nourishing poetry that four-year-olds really understand.

Twinkle Twinkle Chocolate Bar compiled by John Foster (OUP)
Some funny and some silly rhymes about swings and see-saws, cats and dogs, mums and dads, dragons and giants, and mumpie stew. Great fun.

The Owl and the Pussycat by Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear (OUP)
Nonsense rhymes by two of the greatest exponents, beautifully illustrated with rich Victorian-style illustrations by Nicki Palin.

The Teddy Robber by Ian Beck (Corgi)
Someone is stealing Teddies; Tom is determined to find out who, and is in for a giant surprise. This story is a mini-adventure for the very young with illustrations that play cleverly with size and perspective to give a sense of what it is like to be small in a big world.

Avocado Baby by John Burningham (Red Fox)
This story tickles the sense of humour of the very young, and follows a weedy baby in a weedy family who beats the bullies when it starts on a diet of avocado pears.

Willy's Pictures by Anthony Browne (Walker)
There is something completely clear-eyed and honest about the way Browne views the world of families and children. In the brilliant Zoo (Red Fox, £4.50), he charts a day out in which it is the humans who behave like the zoo's animals. This book is just as original, with Browne recreating some of the world's most famous paintings, adding to each his best-loved character, Willy the chimp. Magritte, Dali, Rousseau and Edward Hopper all get the monkey treatment; the results are funny and disturbing at the same time.

The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter (Puffin)
Large-format version of the classic tale about the disobedient little rabbit in Mr McGregor's garden who almost ends up as stew.

Reckless Ruby by Hiawyn Oram (Carnival)
Ruby's parents think she is so precious that they want to wrap her in cotton wool. Ruby has other ideas, and decides that only by being reckless can she avoid this terrible fate. Crucial reading for little girls who do not want to grow up to marry princes.

Winnie the Witch by Korky Paul and Valerie Thomas (OUP)
A Children's Book Award winner that full of visual jokes and amusing detail. Winnie the Witch decides that having a black cat when you live in an all-black house is very confusing.

Not Now, Bernard by David McKee (Red Fox)
One of those books that stays in the mind. Bernard would like a little attention from his parents, but they are so busy they do not even notice that he has been eaten and replaced by a monster. McKee's sly pictures are so delicious you want to gobble them up. A stark reminder that there is no such thing as quality time.

Princess Smartypants by Babette Cole (Puffin)
This princess enjoys being a Ms, but all the princes want her to be their Mrs. A feminist fairytale with a difference, full of good humour. If you enjoy this, try Cole's gender-bending variation on the Cinderella story, Prince Cinders.

Mrs Wobble the Waitress by Allan Alberg (Puffin)
One in a series of user-friendly and funny stories that help children learn to read without patronising either them or their parents. Our favourites are Mr Biff the Boxer, Mr Tick the Teacher, and Mrs Jolly's Joke Shop, from which most children learn their first knock knock joke.

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Recommended Books (5 upwards)

The Magic Finger by Roald Dahl (Puffin)
The little girl in this fantasy has a unique gift. When someone makes her angry she simply points her finger and - zap! - an instant punishment is visited on the offender. When her teacher calls her “a stupid little girl” because she misspells cat, she points her finger and her teacher sprouts whiskers. Quite right! A small child used to being coerced will warm to the summary justice meted out in this tale. A little book with a great big message about the enormity of small children’s feelings.

The Jolly Postman or Other People’s Letters by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (Puffin)
Children are intrigued by this highly original book containing witty cards in envelopes for the Jolly Postman to deliver to fairy-tale characters. Hours and hours of fun.

Recommended Books (6 upwards)

The Dinosaur’s Packed Lunch by Jacqueline Wilson (Corgi)
A great story about a little girl who is looked after by her dad, and has the day from hell on a school visit to the dinosaur museum. Things look up when she turns into a dinosaur, although being scaly-skinned brings its own problems. A perceptive story from an author likely to figure large in your child’s reading over the years. Advanced readers could also try Cliffhanger (£3.99), a good read about Tim, a boy who is hopeless at sport and, to his horror, is sent away on an adventure holiday.

Mossycat by Philip Pullman (Scholastic)
A brilliant, simple idea - and talk about value for money! A series of well-known tales retold by some of the best writers around; each is just fantastic and at £1 very affordable. We have not seen one that is not beautifully, sometimes heart-breakingy, written or wittily illustrated. Besides Pullman’s dark vision of the girl whose mum made her a mossy coat, you can get Anne Fine’s version of the Twelve Dancing Princesses, Gillian Cross’s exquisitely simple telling of the Goose Girl, Berlie Dohert’s the Snow Queen, and Henrietta Branford’s creepy Hansel and Gretel. The list grows longer, parents more thankful. Begin by reading them to your children, and the older ones will start collecting them themselves with their pocket money.

The Enormous Crocodile by Roald Dahl (Puffin)
A golloping, gulping, grumptious story from the master storyteller, concerning a horrid, greedy, brutish crocodile who has secret plans and clever tricks to fill up his tummy with a yummy child. Will make them scream with laughter.

Children dressed up for World Book Day

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