

# Read with Me

Enjoyment of books is the most important factor when learning to read.

Sharing books with adults helps children with learning to read.

This leaflet is full of ideas for helping your child to read and enjoy books.



## Golden Rules:

- Make reading a time of pleasure for you both
- Find somewhere quiet, without the television
- Start sharing books even before your child knows which way up to hold a book
- Learn to accept your child's efforts with praise
- Read books your child loves and don't set up a 'test situation'
- Focus on the things which are right, not on mistakes
- Keep reading to children even after they have learned to read independently
- Stop when they have had enough – it's not a punishment!

For some children, learning to read will seem to happen easily and quickly. For others, more time and support will be needed. Whatever the case, your help will be a powerful influence over your child's development as a reader. For all children praise, encouragement, reassurance and pleasure are the vital factors towards becoming a confident reader.

## Reading with 3 to 5 year olds:

At this stage children should learn that books give pleasure. They need to handle books, enjoy the pictures and hear lots of stories and rhymes. This is not the time to worry about testing them on the words they know or sounding out words. Just enjoy the time you spend together sharing books.

- Read to your child as often as possible – in bed, in the car, in the bath
- Bring stories to life with lots of expression and silly voices
- Talk about the stories and pictures and play 'Guess what's going to happen next'
- Read favourite books over and over again!
- Say catchy bits together, e.g. 'run, run as fast as you can'
- Learn rhymes, songs and jingles together so you both know them by heart and can point to the words as you recite them together
- Borrow books from the school, the library or buy books if you can
- Play a game of 'spot the words' on signs and labels
- Make sure your child sees you reading newspapers, books and magazines – show them it's cool to read!

### Reading with 5 to 6 year olds:

This is the stage when children can tell you about their favourite story and when they begin to pick out well-known words or phrases.

- Take turns to read bits of a favourite story – a whole story is too daunting for a new reader
- Talk about pictures and details that catch your child's interest – this will help with understanding the story and guessing new words
- Run your finger under the words as you read together – in this way, words are seen and heard together
- Don't make a fuss if your child can't read a word – either say the word yourself or encourage your child to guess what it might say
- Play alphabet and sound games such as 'I spy'
- Continue to read to your child everyday

### Reading with 6 to 7 year olds:

At this stage many children want some independence and to read on their own. But they'll still want quiet times with you to share the books they love or to hear you read more challenging material.

- Keeping reading together – taking turns to read to each other
- Talk about beginnings and endings; the characters and how they behave; the bits you find sad, funny or exciting; the words and pictures you find interesting
- Be positive – praise your child for trying hard at their reading – and remember it's all right to make mistakes!
- Spot words inside words
- Read aloud from newspapers, drawing attention to snippets which your child might like to read
- Help your child choose from a range of books from the library
- If English is not your family's first language you can borrow dual language books from the library – you can talk about books and stories in any language
- Tell each other about your favourite books

### Reading with 8 to 11 year olds:

- Be a good example by talking about the reading you do at home and at work
- Visit your library – encourage your child to find books about their interests and hobbies
- Encourage independent reading, as well as you reading a bedtime story or listening to a story tape
- Let your child read with a younger child
- Encourage your child to read a variety of texts – find information out from the internet, cookery books, newspapers, e.t.c.
- Ask lots of questions
- Try and solve word searches and crosswords together – make up your own puzzles
- Use a dictionary to check the meaning of new words

### All shapes, sizes and subjects

- Newspapers and magazines
- Non-fiction books
- Catalogues
- Annuals
- Reference books and encyclopaedias

Or whatever takes their fancy...

### It's more than just words

Before you start reading, take some time to look at the book together. It's not just about reading out the words and the more you discuss what you are reading and think about it together, the better. For example:

- What do you think the book is about?
- Who wrote / illustrated the book?
- What kind of story / book do you think it is?
- Have you read anything similar before?

And whilst you are reading the book, pause and ask...

- What do you think will happen next?

And at the end you might ask...

- What did you think of the book?
- Which character did you like best?
- What would you change about the story if you could?
- Do you think it was well written and why?
- Would you recommend it to a friend?

### Questions:

#### When should I start reading with my child?

It's never too early to read to your child or to sing songs and rhymes. Babies and toddlers enjoy looking at picture books and hearing stories read aloud. They love the rhythms and patterns of familiar stories and rhymes, as well as the pleasure of snuggling up to parents.

#### What sort of texts should I read to my child?

Anything that you feel happy to read – rhymes, picture books, folk tales, information books, comics, signs, labels, or sports reports from the newspaper. Children love the experience of sitting close to you hearing your voice, and if you are enjoying what you are reading, they are learning that reading is a pleasure.

#### What if they want the same book over and over again?

Let them have it. Children love favourite stories. Through rereading, they learn the patterns of written language, and that reading is an enjoyable experience. Just make sure that you also introduce new stories to give them a taste of something different.

### When shall I ask my child to take part in reading?

Most children have a favourite story. When reading a story that is familiar to your child, leave gaps and you will find that they will finish the ends of sentences or join in with repeated phrases, e.g. 'Run, run as fast as you can' or 'Fee, fi, fo, fum'. This is the beginning of reading, although your child is 'reading' from memory. Once a child is familiar with the story, they can begin to recognise words in print. At this stage children may choose to take the book and 'tell' the story in their own words.

### What about the alphabet?

Encourage your child to learn letter names and letter sounds. Children need easy familiarity with letters to recognise their shape and talk about them by name. Alphabet friezes and plastic letters help children learn the names of letters. Games such as 'I-Spy' or silly sentences, rhyming games and songs help children hear letter sounds and patterns.

### What if my child makes a mistake?

If the 'mistake' makes sense, let your child continue reading. The mistakes that matter are the one that don't make sense. It's helpful to read the last two sentences again. Include the word your child used. Talk about whether it makes sense. Tell your child the correct word. The most important thing when reading is that the meaning is clear.

### What should I do if my child does not recognise a word?

In the early stages, just say the word to keep the meaning of the story, or quietly say the first sound and see if your child can predict what the word is. Don't ask your child to sound out an unknown word as this generally doesn't work, particularly with small, common words such as 'the', 'this', or 'you'. If in doubt, always tell your child the word.

### Should I cover up the pictures?

No, pictures are full of interest to children and give clues about what is happening in a story. Encourage your child to look closely at the pictures, to help them with their predictions.

### How often should my child read to me?

Encourage your child to read to you a few times each week at a time that suits you both. They may also like to read to a younger brother or sister, or to grandparents. If your child gets tired, always finish the story and chat about what you've read.

### 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 view of the story or the style of the author or illustrator. 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.