



Reading Information for Parents



As parents or carers you are your child's most influential teacher with an important part to play in helping your child to learn to read. Your child's reading experience is much more than the reading book which comes home from school. Reading is happening all the time in a classroom and in the school. It is taught in specific reading and English lessons, but children are practising and using their 'reading' constantly across all subjects too

Even as your child progresses through school you should still be trying to hear your child read up to the end of year 4. Reading to and with your child every evening for at least ten minutes can make a dramatic difference to a child's achievement within school. A report from the Oxford University Press highlighted the importance of parents reading with their children. 'Children who read outside of class are 13 times more likely to read above the expected level for their age'.

However, if your child is a reluctant reader or they are struggling, it is vital that they are heard by a parent or carer right through primary school. Here are some suggestions on how you can help to make this a positive experience.

10 Tips on Hearing Your Child Read

1. Regular practice - 10 minutes every day is ideal.

Try to read with your child on most school days. Try to set up a reading routine; 'Little and often' is best.

2. Choose a quiet time and assess the mood

Set aside a quiet time, somewhere comfortable, with no distractions. Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough. Assess your child's mood and your own. Is reading time going to be successful today? It is important that reading is a positive experience. If your child is exhausted or you are feeling stressed out or rushed off your feet then the reading experience is not likely to be of much value.

3. Make reading enjoyable

Make reading an enjoyable experience. Sit with your child. Try not to pressurise if he or she is reluctant. If your child loses interest then do something else. If your child is a reluctant reader you might want to consider creating a sticker chart or other reward strategy such as placing a marble in a jar which, when filled up would lead to a small treat. This could be used every time you read with your child.

4. 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'.

5. 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.



6. Success is the key

Parents anxious for a child to progress can mistakenly give a child a book that is too difficult. This can have the opposite effect to the one they are wanting. Remember 'Nothing succeeds like success'. Until your child has built up his or her confidence, it is better to keep to easier books. Struggling with a book with many unknown words is pointless. Flow is lost, the text cannot be understood, and children can then easily become reluctant readers.

A good indicator to use is the 5 finger rule. Ask your child to read the first page of the book and hold up a finger for every word they get wrong, (don't include place names or character names) if they hold up 0-1 Fingers then the text is too easy, 2-3 Fingers means the text is just right, 4-5 Fingers means the text is too hard.



7. Visit the Library

Encourage your child to use the public and school libraries regularly.

8. Communicate

Your child will have a reading diary from school. 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.



9. Talk about the book

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.

10. Variety is important - choose different books

Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials and games eg. picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, newspapers, poems, and information books and story tapes.

Book Recommendations

Sometimes it can be hard to find books which are pitched at the right level. Follow your child's interests and use the five finger rule when choosing books; don't be tempted to choose an age-related text for your child to read if they are struggling - **but you could use one from that list to read to them so they are still accessing a variety of books which interest them.** As a rough guide here are some recommended books that came from the Guardian Book Shop Website.

The best children's books: 2-4 year-olds

Goodnight Moon: Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd, The Elephant and the Bad Baby: Elfrida Vipont and Raymond Briggs, The Snail and the Whale: Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

My Friend Harry: Kim Lewis, Where The Wild Things Are: Maurice Sendak, Dogger: Shirley Hughes. Not Now, Bernard: David McKee, Gorilla: Anthony Browne

Once There Were Giants: Martin Waddell and Penny Dale

The best children's books: 5-7 year-olds

The Sheep-Pig: Dick King-Smith, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: Roald Dahl
The Legend of Captain Crow's Teeth: Eoin Colfer, The Adventures of Captain Underpants: Dav Pilkey, The Worst Witch: Jill Murphy, The Adventures of the Dish and the Spoon: Mini Grey
Flat Stanley: Jeff Brown, Mr Gum and the Biscuit Billionaire: Andy Stanton
Ug: Boy Genius of the Stone Age: Raymond Briggs, The Iron Man: Ted Hughes
Finn Family Moomintroll: Tove Jansson



The best children's books: 8-12 year-olds

Stig of the Dump: Clive King, Charlotte's Web: EB White, The Family from One End Street: Eve Garnett. The Story of Tracy Beaker: Jacqueline Wilson,
Matilda: Roald Dahl
Tom's Midnight Garden: Philippa Pearce, The Phantom Tollbooth: Norton Juster
The Narnia books: CS Lewis, Harry Potter: JK Rowling, The Borrowers: Mary Norton
Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror: Chris Priestly, The Lionboy Trilogy: Zizou Corder, Skellig: David Almond