



The Power of Reading

- Creating a love of reading in children is one of the most powerful ways of improving academic standards in school.
- A reading family is a learning and thinking family.
- There can be few better ways to improve pupils' chances in school, or beyond in the wider world, than to enable them to become truly independent readers.
- Reading is all about acquiring meaning; i.e. for enjoyment, information and understanding.
- It is not a performance.
- It is not a test – every time you finish a book, do you always choose a harder one next time?

Reading at Home – Enjoy!

- Reading is taught and practised in school. Home is also a great place to practise - but in a more informal and relaxed atmosphere.
- Make reading visible; have books available in your home.
- Share books every day.
- Boys need to see that reading is something men do.
- Talk about books.
- Sit and listen – don't do chores around the reader! Turn the TV off.
- Respect choices – your child is much more likely to become a better reader if they are interested in what they are reading. Comics and special interest magazines are allowed!

Read to your children

- Introduce your children to different types of books; classic fiction, chapter books, short stories, joke books, poetry, non-fiction.
- Read them the book that was your favourite when you were a child.

- Read slowly with expression. Try to use different and funny voices for characters.
- Follow the words and read the story using the pictures to help understanding.
- Talk about what is happening and what might happen next
- Leave stories on a cliff hanger.

Some suggestions for reading with your children

Birth - Age 2

*** Reading aloud is an intimate moment that you and your child have together. Snuggle close and share books that can easily be held while your child is in your lap. Read aloud often.**

*** Find books with large, bright and colourful pictures, exciting sounds, and rhyming patterns in the text (i.e., Mother Goose rhymes). To reinforce the rhyme, sing or recite the stories during the day.**

*** When your child is a baby, choose books that help him learn the names of all the objects that surround him. Point to the objects in the pictures and call them by name.**

*** Choose sturdy board books and place them anywhere your child will be, like the highchair, the car seat, the stroller, and the toy room.**

Ages 2 - 4

*** Keep books handy everywhere (in your bag, in the car, a little box in most rooms of the house) and integrate them in with toys so that children are just as likely to pick up a book as they are to pick up some blocks or a stuffed animal.**

*** Set a special routine time and comfortable location for reading. Bedtime, while dinner is in the oven, or while a younger sibling is sleeping, are some suggestions.**

*** Demonstrate to your child that reading occurs anytime, any place. Read everything around you such as store signs, road signs, and magazine covers. Create grocery lists and lists of things to do and read them aloud.**

*** Read the same books over and over. Let your child participate in the story reading by lifting flaps, turning pages, pointing to pictures, and repeating words or phrases that he remembers.**

*** Always choose a few books to read aloud that are a few levels above their current vocabulary to introduce new words and concepts and build listening skills.**

Ages 5 - 7

- * Choose books with patterns, rhymes and repetitive phrases. Emphasize the rhythmic pattern as you read aloud and encourage your child to "fill in the blank" by pausing before you reach the end of the rhyming line or repeated phrase.**
- * Try reading a familiar book by covering up the words and telling a story just from the pictures. This shows your child how to use the illustrations to tell a story.**
- * Sit in a way that your child can see the text while you read aloud. Help your child to recognize that the words you read follow the words on the page by underlining the words with your finger as you read. You can also ask your child to find individual words based on their beginning sounds. These types of "direct learning" activities fit in better when your child has heard the story often.**
- * Set aside time for assisted reading as your child begins to learn how to read. You read a page to him and then he reads the next page to you.**
- * Choose a variety of books that include fairy tales; folk tales from different countries; non-fictional books about animals; fictional stories that touch on early science concepts like the seasons, weather, and animal habits; characters that learn lessons about friendship and feelings and look at the world through a child's eyes.**
- * Often, your child will want to revisit the book by himself after you've read it a few times. Encourage him to read it silently instead of asking him to read it back to you; in this way, you're encouraging silent reading for enjoyment. Grab a silent reading book for yourself and curl up next to him to share a few moments of "shared silent reading."**

Ages 7 - 9

- * Continue to read aloud to your child even though he has already learned to read on his own. Children learn a lot about the flow of language, their vocabulary grows, and they get many opportunities to hear what good reading sounds like.**
- * Good choices at this age are chapter books, sports stories, riddles and jokes, word-plays and poetry. Encourage your child's interest by reading aloud books in the same series or by the same poet.**
- * Subscribe to a child's magazine that focuses on particular subjects like Sports Illustrated for Kids, Ranger Rick, or Time for Kids. Visit the library to read aloud from reference books about things that your child may discover in the real world like insects, flowers, and snakes.**

* Read aloud the description of various entries in a recipe book and choose a recipe to make together. Choose a particular craft from a craft book and read aloud as you follow the directions together.

* Chapter books (slightly longer children's stories divided into chapters and having fewer illustrations) are a wonderful way to foster longer attention spans, increased vocabularies and a more vivid imagination. Share these books during read-aloud sessions now. When your child gets a little older he will likely revisit these same books to read by himself.

Ages 10-12

* At this age, children begin to develop an appreciation for mysteries, informational books, tall tales, adventures with real heroes, biographies, and interactive choose-your-own adventure stories. They are often involved in active sports, and developing best friends. Try to select books from these categories so that your child will be given access to a broad range of age-appropriate topics and various literary styles.

* Visit the library and make time for books in between the sports practices, homework assignments, and social activities that your child is involved in. Entice older children by reading the beginning of the book aloud. Just as the tension in the story builds, leave off, and often, children will want to finish the book by reading it themselves.

* If you plan on reading an entire book aloud to a child of this age, choose a book with a reading level a few years higher than your child's current level. This will build his vocabulary and improve his listening skills.

* Find interesting bits of news to read aloud from the newspaper or news magazines. Introduce your child to current events, important social and political figures, new geographic regions and different cultural practices and beliefs.

Blending Sounds — Phonics

- The words that your children speaks and reads are made up of separate sounds, (phonemes). Your child will learn these sounds in Reception and Key Stage One. S/he will learn to blend the separate sounds together to read a word. This is what your child might call 'sounding out'.

- You can help your child to blend sounds by making sure that they recognise the sound that the letter/s make and say the sounds correctly. The separate sounds in words are very short and crisp. There should be no 'er' sound at the end. So, t is 't' not 'ter'. m is 'mmm' not 'mer'. 'c a t' not 'cur arh tur'. If the sounds are too long, the word will not make any sense to the reader.

- Play oral blending games at home and when out and about. 'Please could you bring me the c u p. Let's go to the sh o p s'
- Use phoneme fingers – say each sound crisply and point to the tip of each finger; thumb first. Fold down any unused fingers. Run your finger across the tips and blend the sounds to read the word.

When phonics are not enough

- Sometimes 'sounding out' is not enough. Some words don't fit the rules so other strategies are needed.
- If your child cannot read a word suggest that they miss it out and read to the end of the sentence. What word would make sense?
- What sound does it begin with?
- Does it sound right? Ran not runned; gave not gived.
- Does it look a bit like other words you know? e.g. if your child knows 'could' they might be able to read 'should' and 'would'.
- What word would make sense in this story or subject?
- Does the picture give you a clue?

Understanding, connecting, engaging and responding to texts

Being able to read the words, does not necessarily mean that your child understands what they have read. S/he might sound like a fluent reader which can make you believe that they are a 'good' reader. The only way to judge how much your child understands is to talk about the book and ask questions that make him/her think.

- What do you think this story/book will be about?
- I wonder what will happen next. What do you think?
- Does this remind you of anything/a place that you have been to/a feeling?
- What is happening here?
- How do you think this character feels?
- What do you think s/he should do?
- What would you do?

- Why do you think the character has done/said that?
- Where might we find information about . . . ?
- What do you already know about?
- Does this remind you of any other stories that you have read?
- What were the main events in this story?
- What happened at the beginning, middle, in the end?
- What does this word mean? How can we find out?
- Do you like these words? Why? How do they make you feel? Why do you think the author has used them?
- How do you think the author feels about this character/situation/subject?
- Did you like the story/book? Why? Why not?
- Which five words would you choose to describe this character and why?
- If you could ask the character three questions what would they be?
- Do you think this character is good or bad? Why?
- What was the best bit?

Why can't I skip my reading tonight?

Pupil A reads 30 minutes every night,

Pupil B reads only 4 minutes a nightor not at all!

Multiply minutes a night X 5 times a week.

Pupil A 30 minutes X 5 = 150 minutes.

Pupil B 4 minutes X 5 = 20 minutes.

Multiply minutes a week X 4 weeks a month.

Pupil A reads 600 minutes a month.

Pupil B reads 80 minutes a month.

Multiply minutes a month X 9 months.

Pupil A reads 5400 minutes in a school year.

Pupil B reads 720 minutes in a school year.

Pupil A reads the equivalent of 13 whole school days a year.

Pupil B reads the equivalent of 2 whole school days a year.

By the end of Year 6, if both pupils have maintained the same reading habits...

Pupil A will have read the equivalent of 91 whole school days and Pupil B only 14 school days. One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened undoubtedly, will school performance? How do you think Pupil B will feel about themselves? Which pupil will read better? Which pupil will write better? Which pupil will have a better vocabulary? Which pupil would be more successful in school and life?

No teacher, no matter how talented , can make up for those lost hours.

Please make time to hear your child read each day.

Ueful Web Addresses

www.rif.org/parents

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

www.topmarks.co.uk/parents/readingtips

www.kidsource.com

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies

www.storiesfromtheweb.org
