

Reading Helping your child at home

Reading

The primary purpose of reading is to make sense from the text. To do this a child needs to be able to read the words, interpret the information the words are providing and relate the information to their context. It is appropriate for parents of children in primary school to continue to support their child with home reading all the way through their primary years. Subtle changes to this support as a child's reading ability improves can improve your child's efficient use of a variety of reading strategies.

Phase 1 (Typically Pre-school)

- Model a love of reading by having your child see you reading.
- Read and discuss the content of books with your child for enjoyment and to gather information.
- Discuss new words to expand their vocabulary.

Phase 2 (Typically Kindergarten)

- Continue to read to your child, discussing new vocabulary and content. After reading a story, ask what happened at the start, in the middle and at the end.
- Point to the individual words as you read. This not only shows your child that one word said, is one word on the page (1:1 correspondence), but also that we read from left to right and return sweep at the end of a line.
- When they start recognising letters and words and begin to sound out words – be very clear on words that can be sounded out and words that are 'tricky'. Tricky words are words that are used often but may not follow the usual sound patterns.
- Have your child point to the words as they read.
- Encourage your child to sound out words.
- For tricky words say 'that is a tricky word, can you remember what it is?' If not, simply give them the word. After reading the book, you could go back and find the word e.g. are, as many times as you can.
- Ask questions about what they have read.

Phase 3 (Typically Year 1)

- Although some children need to point to every word throughout Year 1, it is desirable to wean students off pointing to every word to improve reading fluency.
- Encourage your child to put their finger at the beginning of each line and read groups of words (phrases) at a time. If they lose track, then they are not ready for this step yet and should go back to pointing to every word.

- Emphasise the use of punctuation as indications of when we should pause. Model fluent reading and read sentences together to help your child gain fluency.
- Encourage your child to use letter/ sound relationships to decode words. They will have a developing knowledge of digraphs (two letters that make one sound such as 'ea') as the year progresses. Remind them as required that 'those two letters go together to make one sound'.
- Begin to reinforce other ways we get meaning from text: using meaning and sentence structure. For example, if they are stuck on the name of a character in a story and have read about them before, say 'I think that might be who the story is about?'. Or if they read ' Sally was sitting on the bear.' Ask 'Does that sound right?' 'Does that ending look right?'
- Ask questions about what your child has read. If they have read a story, ask them what happened at the start, in the middle and at the end.
- Continue to read to your child, discussing new vocabulary and content.

Phase 4 (Typically Year 2)

- Your child should now be encouraged to read simple chapter books. Providing opportunities to read books in a series is often a motivating factor for many children. Ella and Olivia, The Magic Treehouse, Tashi, Hey Jack, Rainbow Magic, A-Z Mysteries are all popular and appropriate series.
- Tracking with a finger is no longer desired as this limits fluency. As your child is ready, encourage them to read without their finger, grouping words together and using punctuation as a guide of when to pause in their reading.
- Your child is now moving away from learning to read, and improving comprehension to read to learn becomes the goal.
- Ask your child a few questions each time they read to develop their reading comprehension. Can they retell the section they have read? Can they answer questions about specific detail? Can they predict what will happen and give you evidence from the text to support their answer? Find the part of the text that gives them the answer to each question.
- Continue to read to your child. This should now be a text potentially without pictures at a higher reading level than your child's level. This will improve their vocabulary and encourage them to read more complex texts.

Phase 5 (Typically Years 3-6)

- Reading to learn and for pure enjoyment is now the focus of reading.
- Where possible, continue to read a higher level text to them and discuss the content and vocabulary. This may be a book you are reading together, or it may be a news article or magazine article of interest.
- It is no longer necessary to hear your child read out loud to you every day. However it is still important to engage with them about their reading. Allocate a time for them to read and let them see you read.

- Reading the same series of books is now a hindrance to improving reading performance. Book series often use similar vocabulary. Encourage your child to read a range of books on a variety of topics over a period of time. Books from a series are fine as long as they are reading other books as well.
- After reading ask your child about what they have read. Common questions relating to comprehension include: Why did the author write this text? What was the main idea of the text? How does this book compare with other books you have read about the same theme? What sorts of things in the book could really happen? How would you rate the book and why?
- Providing evidence from a book to support their answers becomes increasingly important as students move into Years 5 and 6. What evidence is there that the author wanted to entertain us? How do we know the author had a high regard for that character? Where does it tell us in the book that it was challenging for the character?

Being a good reader not only assists us with tasks we have throughout our lives, but contributes to our wellbeing. Let's work together to make reading a life long skill for your child.