

Reading advice:

0 - 3 years old



It's never too early to start sharing stories. Point out the pictures and encourage your baby to chat.



Your baby will love the sound of your voice. Find a quiet place to enjoy a story or book together.



Share favourite stories again and again. Repeating phrases helps build children's language.



Introduce your child to a wide variety of books including books in any shape/ size - noisy books, feely books, etc.



If your child shows no interest in a book you want to read, don't push it as very young children can find some stories hard to follow. Try again in a few months or just focus on talking about a picture.



Try making a scrapbook with/ for your child full of pictures and words. Read the words with your child and get them to say what should be in their story.

3 - 5 years old



Let your children pretend to read. If your child is familiar with books, they'll get on better when they start school.



Help your child to join in. Let them turn pages and guess what happens next. Follow the words with your finger, point out pictures, talk about the story.



Use funny voices, toys and actions to make the characters come alive.



Little and often! Young children can get bored quickly- a good ten minutes is better than a difficult half-hour.



Choose books to read together. Don't worry if your child wants the same book again and again - if they keep going back to a book it is because they are getting something from it.



Try this game. Cut out pictures from catalogues or magazines of objects that all begin with the same letter, plus a few that don't. Write down the names of the objects and get your child to match the picture to the name.

5 - 6 years old



Encourage your child to read to you. Follow the words with your finger and sound out the words (c-a-t: cat).



Be positive. Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. It's all right to make mistakes.



It's not just books! Point out all the words around you: labels on food, street signs, etc.



Ask your teacher for suggestions on how you can help with reading and writing



Read yourself. Set a good example by reading for pleasure and talking about the reading you do at work and home. (Dads too!)



Read a book twice! Once your child has read it once try looking again at the pictures, making up new endings, drawing a picture from it, making a wanted poster or passport for a character, asking some comprehension questions (see below), finding more information from the internet, etc.



Find your family's top five reads. Ask everyone in your family to name their favourite reads - book, magazine, comic, newspaper. Involve grandparents, cousins etc. Ask WHY they like a book (children learn to express opinions by listening to others)

6 - 7 years old



Try to read in a quiet time. It is better to read a small amount every day rather than a lot only once a week. If your child finds reading tricky, suggest a page to read to so they know how much they need to do- it makes the reading seem more achievable for them.



If books are long try sharing the reading. Read a chapter or a page each. If you know your child is becoming confident let them read parts of the book "in their head"- some children like to get on with a story and find reading every page aloud a chore. Make sure you still listen to them read at least some of their book and check they have understood the story.



Ask your children questions about the book- the why, who, what, when, where, which and how questions. (See examples below)



Extend your child's reading by extending the story - I wonder what would happen if..., What would that character do if..., What if this happened instead..



Encourage your child to read different types of books- stories, poems, comics, plays, information etc.



Stop a book at a cliff-hanger - play the What happens now game.



If your child finds a particular book really interesting, see if you can find other works by the same author to read.



Read a book twice! Once your child has read it once try looking again at the pictures, making up new endings, drawing a picture from it, making a wanted poster or passport for a character, asking some comprehension questions (see below), finding more information from the internet, etc.

Some suggested questions

- ◆ Why did she/he/they do that?
- ◆ Where do you think they are going next? Why?
- ◆ What did he want? What did he do?
- ◆ When is the story set? How do you know?
- ◆ How is she/ he going to get out of this? (especially good for adventure stories)
- ◆ Which one will work/ succeed? Why? (good for stories where characters have a choice or for non-fiction where things are being made)
- ◆ What have we learnt about...? (good for non-fiction)
- ◆ How is it set out? What is this about? Why does the poet say...? (good for poetry)
- ◆ What would happen if...?
- ◆ What is the character like? What would he/she do in another situation? (quite difficult- you may need to give some suggestions)
- ◆ Do you like this story/ character/ book? Why/ why not? (encourage them to be specific as to why they do/ don't like a book)

NB- remember to check inside the covers of the book- many of our school books have further suggestions to help your child progress in reading and comprehension.