



Helping your child with Reading.





Simple advice on helping a child start reading...

During the first years at primary school, as your child gets to grips with the basics of reading, your main role as parents is to make the most of regular opportunities for practising reading outside of school and, most importantly, to make sure that reading remains a fun and interesting activity your child wants to do.

Reading TO our children – Even if your child has reached the point where he can attempt to read some books on his own, it's really important to continue reading to them just as you always have - with a cuddle and with no pressure to perform.

As they struggle with the early stages of learning to read it's easy for a child to forget that books are an enjoyable part of life. Bedtime stories remind everyone of this.



Home reading practice – We send home books for children to practise reading. Your input here is absolutely essential! Like all new skills, whether it's cycling a two-wheeler or tying their laces, the more minutes of practice that are put in, the better your child will master reading. If they are reluctant, suggest you start the story off, or you read every other page. Help your child understand this is a joint enterprise and not a test. Ten minutes a day (rather than half an hour twice a week), is perfect – any more and your child might get turned off.

Focus on meaning – At school a lot of attention is given to letter sounds and word-level skills in the early stages of reading. Home is the perfect place to focus on the meaning of a book. Discuss the characters, their feelings, the pictures, what might happen next and make links with other stories or programmes your child has enjoyed.



Dream Big
READ!

Words all around us - Your child will have certain letters, sounds or 'tricky' words to practise reading at home. This can be turned into a game. Can they find those letters or words on a cereal box? On the pages of a favourite story? On signs in the local area, such as the playground?

Scrapbooks – Would your child like to make a scrapbook of real football headlines with photos of the players alongside? Or of Disney princess pictures and story titles? Children will return to this kind of interest-led scrapbook time and again, perfecting their reading skills as they do so!

Golden Rules

- Getting the balance right between making reading fun AND keeping up regular short bursts of reading practice can be tricky at times.
- **DO** keep reading TO your child, aside from their reading practice. It will help them to remember how interesting and enjoyable books are, and will keep them motivated to want to read.
- **DO** your best to stick to a ritual of ten minutes reading practice, most nights a week. It doesn't always have to be with a book – it could be a game such as looking for the letter 'p' around the house.
- **DON'T** point out every mistake your child is making. Children need encouragement and positive reinforcement to be confident, and a confident child makes a better learner.
- **DO** praise your child's efforts, even if you think they not trying their best. Learning to read is a tiring and lengthy business. It is really important to keep your child motivated.
- **DO** stop to look at the pictures and talk about them. Your child's teacher won't always have time to linger over things like this but pictures are a huge part of a book's attraction for children.
- **DO** give your child opportunities to read things they already knows by heart – jokes, song lyrics, birthday card messages or simple books for younger siblings.
- **DON'T** forget how important your input and attention is – just a little and often will help your child to WANT to learn to read and to understand how important you think reading is.