

HOW TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

You may know that it's really important to support and encourage reading at home, but what do you need to do when your child brings a book home, and how can you pick up where the teacher left off? The summary of key findings in *Reading for Enjoyment: A literature review* (2016, National Literacy Trust) shows that you can really make a difference.

"Parental beliefs, attitudes and behaviours directly support their child's reading for enjoyment and have also been linked with higher reading scores and higher reading motivations."

Reading for Enjoyment: A literature review (2016, National Literacy Trust)

Here are five steps to success when reading with your child:

1 Create a routine

It can be hard to find the perfect moment to sit down and enjoy reading together. If you can, get into a routine of reading at the same time each day so that you are more likely to stick to a daily reading session. Reading together at bedtime is a popular choice, but you might find early morning or after school sessions more successful if your child is too tired in the evening.

2 Make time to read little and often

Reading together doesn't have to take a long time; just ten minutes a day makes a positive impact. If your child is really engaged in the reading session, continue for longer, but if they are tired after a busy day at school (or if you're tired after a busy day at work ...) just read a few pages to maintain the routine.

3 Prepare a reading environment

Learning to read can be hard and it feels even harder if there are lots of distractions at home. Try to find a quiet space – no TV, no siblings or pets making noise. Also think about being comfortable, in a place with enough light. Feeling relaxed will help your child to enjoy the experience even more.

4 Get comfortable, engage with and support reading

Get settled and think about whether you are both sitting in good positions to see the text and that you are able to support as necessary during the reading session. Your main role is to check accuracy of word reading/decoding. Use the notes on the inside front cover of *Reading Planet* books to give you practical ideas when talking with your child about the text and for making the most of the content. These pages highlight tricky words and feature example questions to discuss with your child before, during and after reading the books to help develop understanding. There are also ready-to-read tips and activities to try. These simple activities are based on the latest research findings on how children learn to read most effectively.

5 Praise after reading

It's important to offer encouragement whilst your child is reading, but try and praise your child for at least one achievement (even if the session wasn't very successful!) after reading. This ends on a positive note and helps your child look forward to the next session.

What if English isn't your home language?

For families whose first language isn't English, here are some additional tips for supporting your child's reading:

- ★ After your child has read to you in English, it is very valuable to talk about the book in your home language. You can talk about the pictures, the meanings of words and even retell the story, or summarise the content of a non-fiction book. This will help your child to develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- ★ Try to get hold of the audio version of your child's reading books, so they can listen to the text being read while they follow the printed words. This will provide a pronunciation model for your child, as well as a model of expression and rhythm when reading aloud.
- ★ Use a good-quality bilingual dictionary so that you can look up the meanings of words you don't know. Picture dictionaries are also a fun way for your child to learn new words in English.
- ★ If you are unsure about the sounds your child is being taught to read (phonics), there are many phonics pronunciation video guides on the Internet that can provide a useful reference.
- ★ Look out for any workshops at your child's school that are designed to support EAL parents.