



## Reading at Home

### Early Years and Key Stage 1: A Parents' Guide

In Key Stage 1, as children become more confident in their reading, it is important that they keep reading independently, extending the words they recognise and their ability to use phonic and context clues to work out unknown words. By the start of Key Stage 2 most children will have taken on the majority of the skills required for reading during their infant years. Once a child can read a text fluently it becomes more important to check they have understood the text and begun to take on the nuances of meaning. To help your child at this stage, still read with them and encourage them to read to you, but also let them read in depth and then ask what the book was about and explore ideas from it with them. There are some ideas and questions in this leaflet to support you with this. The skills continue to be taught in school and the opportunity to practise these as regularly as possible at home, alongside their reading target, is very important.

#### *Helping your child with reading*

The following points are to support you when reading at home with your child. Regular, daily reading is the key to reading success. Two or three of these sessions could be your child reading silently to him/herself followed by a discussion about the book. The other days could be an opportunity for your child to read aloud. Please sign your child's reading record each time they have read, recording the pages covered. The amount of time children spend reading will vary. Be encouraging and guided by your child's interest.

#### *These guidelines may help you develop reading further:*

**Read, read, read!** Read to your children every day. Make it part of your bedtime routine, an after-dinner activity, or a fun way to spend time together on the couch. Encourage your children to read signs on the road, menus, weather reports, game directions, movie listings and other daily living items. This will help motivate your children to understand the importance of being able to read well. Try and make sure that your child reads a range of different books, not always stories. It can also encourage them to naturally expand their vocabulary through encountering certain words regularly in daily life.

**Act out the act of reading.** Encourage your child to pretend to 'read' a book before he or she can read words.

**Make reading time an event.** Make sure you are relaxed and comfortable during the reading session, and designate a specific time or area for reading. Give lots of praise and encouragement, and encourage your child to read with expression.

**Set a good example by letting your children see you read.** Show them that reading is a good choice for leisure activity and sure beats watching TV. Talk to your children about the book you're reading. Model the reading process yourself by having your own book/ paper to read, perhaps at the same time as them. Be aware that if all your reading is on digital devices, your child may equate this to 'playing games', and this can prevent them from seeing the value of reading.



**Stock your house with reading materials.** Keep a wide variety of reading material available in your house. Try putting books and magazines in your bathrooms, bedrooms, cars, family rooms and next to your television.

**Get the library habit.** Make sure everyone in your family has a library card, either for the Learning Centre or for a local library. Encourage your child to regularly return their books and replace them with new ones. While you are there, check out a book yourself!

**Compromise.** Make sure reading sessions are balanced between you reading, your child reading and discussion. You may encourage them to read alone, but show them you value their reading by asking them questions about the section or chapter that they have read.

**Give books as gifts.** Then find a special place for your children to keep their own library.

**Make reading a privilege.** Say, “You can stay up 15 minutes later tonight if you read in bed.” Or you might say, “Because you helped with the dishes, I have time to read you an extra story.”

**Be aware of reading problems.** Observe how well your children can sound out words, understand what they have read and understand the meaning of new words. If it seems like your child is having difficulty reading, practise that skill the next time you read and seek support if needed. Your child should be able to read approximately 9 out of every 10 words in the book, less than this and the book may be too difficult.

**Play board games with your children.** Board games require putting into action everything that is read, and can help increase reading comprehension. Help your children read the instructions to a new board game or review the rules of an old favourite. Ask if they'd like to change the rules or game play slightly and implement their suggestions.

**Cook or bake with a recipe.** Find a lengthy recipe for something that your children love to eat and make it together. Turn over recipe reading duties to your children and watch them take what they've read and turn it into something delicious.

**Read in your home language.** Buy dual-language books if English isn't your family's first language - you can talk about books and stories, and develop a love for them, in any language.

**Read books together and discuss.** Read to your children every evening and let them read to you. At the end of each chapter, discuss what happened. Parents can still share books with older children by reading the same book separately. Ask your child every day, “Where are you in the book? Did you get to Chapter 5 yet? What do you think about what happened to Harry?” Allowing children to retell a story that they read lets them practice comprehension skills. Ask questions about the characters, the plot, the ending of the book and whether your child enjoyed it. If your child is not enjoying a story, stop reading it and ask them to change the book. Discuss the meaning of difficult or unusual words and encourage your child to use these new words in sentences when talking to you. Encourage talk about favourite authors and illustrators, giving reasons for their choices.

**Use the following prompts to guide you during reading discussion:**

- Look at the front cover. What could the book be about?
- Who is the author?
- Who is an illustrator? What do they do?
- What does that word mean? Read the sentence around it to see if you can figure it out.
- How can you read an unfamiliar word? Can you read each of the sounds and then blend them together?
- What is the root of that word? What other words is it in and can that help you with the word's meaning?
- What do you think will happen next? What makes you think that?



- How do you think that character feels? Why? How would you feel in that situation?
- Can you predict how the book will end?
- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- Is there a message or a moral in this story? What is it?
- Can you retell the story in your own words?
- Do you like how the story ended? Can you think of another ending that would've worked?

**You can ask questions that have answers located directly in the text:**

- What did..... do?
- Who did..... do it to
- How many..... were/are there?
- Who are.....?
- Can you tell me what this word/bit means?
- What kind of ..... is that?

**You can ask questions that draw on students' personal knowledge or experiences.**

- How do you make/do.....?
- What happened when..... did.....?
- What happened to.....?
- What do you think might happen next OR what happened before?
- How many times...
- What examples can you find?
- Where did this happen?
- Where was..... when this was happening?

**You can draw solely on your child's thoughts and opinions linked to the ideas in the text.**

- Have you ever...
- If you could...
- If you were going to...
- In your opinion...
- Do you agree with.....? Why?
- Do you know anyone who.....?
- How do you feel about.....?

**Keep up a regular dialogue with your child's teacher through their Learning Journal.**

**Have fun!**