

Helping Your Child

Success as a reader underpins learning in all school subjects. Our aim is for all pupils to be able to read well, both for pleasure and for information.

You can help your child by giving them a chance at home to practise the skills that they are taught in school, and by helping them to enjoy reading. This guidance gives some practical ideas and explains how you can help your child at home.

HOW PUPILS LEARN TO READ

Learning to read is a complex process that involves two skills:

RECOGNISING the words that are written

- The key skill is phonics – ‘decoding’ the letters in a written word by knowing the sounds that they make, and blending them together from left to right to make a word. For example, knowing that /n/ and /igh / and /t/ make “*night*”.
- Your school will teach your child these skills. The more practice and help with reading that you can give them at home, the better they will get.

UNDERSTANDING what they are reading

- Knowing what each word means, and understanding what is happening in a story or what information is being given.
- You can help your child with this by reading to them, and by talking with them about what they are reading.

It’s also very important that pupils ENJOY reading.

- If your child likes reading, they will want to read more. And the more they read, the better they will get.
- You can help your child with this by, **listening** to them read, and **talking** with them about reading.

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD

1. Read to your child

This depends on your child’s age. You will know best whether they still like being read to.

Read to your child every day if you can – for 5 to 10 minutes at bedtime, or any quiet time when you can enjoy a book together.

Read anything that you will enjoy together – e.g. picture books, story books, comics or information leaflets. Take turns to choose what to read,

and talk about why you are choosing it. If your child chooses the same favourite book 20 times in a row, that's fine!

2. Talk to your child about reading

- Talk about books, street signs, TV captions, food labels, sport reports, web pages – anything and everything.
- Talk about the sounds that letters make.
- Talk about new and interesting words you find when reading together
- Talk about useful and interesting information you find.
- Talk about the fun you can have with sounds in games, rhymes, tongue twisters and songs.
- Talk about issues and viewpoints you meet in reading.

3. Listen to your child reading

Try and make reading as enjoyable as possible. Make it an unhurried, comfortable and pleasant experience where there is time to explore the book and the ideas or information that it contains.

If your child has read a longer book, magazine or other material independently, ask them to read to you a part they find funny, scary or interesting.

THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD READING

If they find a word difficult

- Give them time to try to work it out; don't hurry.
- Encourage them to sound out the letters and blend them from left to right.
- If it seems too difficult, just tell them what the word is.

Talk about the book

- Before you start, talk about what the book is about.
- During the story, sometimes ask your child "What do you think will happen next?"
- Afterwards, ask your child: "What did you think about ...?" or "Tell me about ..." or "Did you like this book – why/why not?"

PHRASES TO USE

"Can you sound out the letters . . . and blend them together?"

"Well done, you had a go."

"Well done, you used expression."

"Did that sound right?"

"Did that make sense?"

"Good, you corrected yourself"

"I like how you re-read that bit to check that you got it right."

"Let's try reading that word again."

"Remember to follow the punctuation."

QUESTIONS TO ASK

"What does ... mean?"

"What did...do?"

"Which word told you that...?"

"How did...react?"

"What does...think?"

"How does the layout help...?"

"Why did the author choose to...?"

"Why does the author use...?"

"Why does the writer compare ...to...?"

"Explain why ... is used?"

"How has the choice of words created a feeling of...?"

"What do phrases such as ...tell you?"

"Does the author like...how do you know?"

"What can you tell me about the viewpoint of the author?"

"How do you know...?"

"What else might make...sad/angry?"