

Reading Books With Children: A Guide

Introduction

There can be few things as powerful as regularly reading and sharing books with your child. It has astonishing benefits for children: comfort and reassurance, confidence and security, relaxation, happiness and fun. Giving a child time and full attention when reading them a story tells them they matter. It builds self-esteem, vocabulary, feeds imagination and even improves their sleeping patterns. Moreover, reading with your child contributes to our world knowledge and well-being as well as developing children's literacy skills. The will and want to read influences the skill (and vice versa).



Your child will be bringing home a 'Reception Book Bingo' and a 'Storytime Online' leaflet recommending books to share with them. Your child belongs to our school library and we are aiming to encourage the weekly borrowing of these books for them to enjoy with you.

How to read a story with your child

If you can find the time beforehand, read the read-aloud book to yourself first, so you can think about how you are going to read it to your child.

On the first reading:

- Make reading aloud feel like a treat. Make it a special quiet time and cuddle up so you can both see the book.
- Show curiosity about what you are going to read: 'This book looks interesting. It's about an angry child. I wonder how angry he gets...'
- Read through the whole story the first time without stopping too much. Let the story weave its own magic.
- Read with enjoyment. If you are not enjoying it, your child won't.

Read favourite stories over and over again.

On later readings:

- Let your child pause, think about and comment on the pictures.
- If you think your child did not understand something, try to explain: 'Oh! I think what's happening here is that...'
- Chat about the story and pictures: 'I wonder why she did that?'; 'Oh no, I hope she's not going to...'; 'I wouldn't have done that, would you?'
- Link the stories to your own family experiences: 'This reminds me of when ...'
- Link stories to others that your child knows: 'Ah! Do you remember the dragon in? Do you remember what happened to him?'
- Encourage your child to join in with the bits they know.
- Avoid asking questions to test what your child remembers.
- Avoid telling children that reading stories is good for them.

10 top tips for parents to support children to read



- 1. Encourage your child to read:** Reading helps your child's wellbeing, develops imagination and has educational benefits too. Just a few minutes a day can have a big impact on children of all ages.
- 2. Read aloud regularly:** Try to read to your child every day; make it part of their daily routine. It's a special time to snuggle up and enjoy a story. Stories matter and children love re-reading them and poring over the pictures. Try adding funny voices to bring characters to life.
- 3. Encourage reading choice:** Give children lots of opportunities to read different things in their own time - it doesn't just have to be books. There's fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics, magazines, recipes and much more. Try leaving interesting reading material in different places around the home and see who picks it up.
- 4. Read together:** Choose a favourite time to read together as a family and enjoy it. This might be everyone reading the same book together, reading different things at the same time, or getting your children to read to each other. This time spent reading together can be relaxing for all.
- 5. Create a comfortable environment:** Make a calm, comfortable place for your family to relax and read independently – or together.
- 6. Make use of your local library:** Libraries in England are now open so visit them when you're able to and explore all sorts of reading ideas. Local libraries also offer brilliant online materials, including audiobooks and ebooks to borrow. See Libraries Connected for more digital library services and resources:
www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/librariesfromhome.
- 7. Talk about books:** This is a great way to make connections, develop understanding and make reading even more enjoyable. Start by discussing the front cover and talking about what it reveals and suggests the book could be about. Then talk about what you've been reading and share ideas. You could discuss something that happened that surprised you, or something new that you found out. You could talk about how the book makes you feel and whether it reminds you of anything.
- 8. Bring reading to life:** You could try cooking a recipe you've read together. Would you recommend it to a friend? Alternatively, play a game where you pretend to be the characters in a book, or discuss an interesting article you've read.



- 9. Make reading active:** Play games that involve making connections between pictures, objects and words, such as reading about an object and finding similar things in your home. You could organise treasure hunts related to what you're reading. Try creating your child's very own book by using photos from your day and adding captions.
- 10. Engage your child in reading in a way that suits them:** You know your child best and you'll know the best times for your child to read. If they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) then short, creative activities may be the way to get them most interested. If English is an additional language, encourage reading in a child's first language, as well as in English. What matters most is that they enjoy it.

DON'T FORGET: Put away your smartphone when you are reading with your child – enjoy the magical and special time spent together exploring the wonder and excitement of books. Make the most of these moments because they will not last forever.

Further guidance: Words For Life: wordsforlife.org.uk/parent-support/reading-your-child/

Ask questions when you are reading together. For example:

- What do you see on this page?
- How do you think the characters feel?
- What do you think is going to happen next?

When you have finished, talk about how your child feels about the book:

- What did they like?
- What didn't they like?
- What can they remember about what happened?
- Who was their favourite character? Why?
- Link the story to their own experiences. Can they remember when they did something similar?

Most importantly, have fun!

Who?

Be a reading role model!

If your child sees you reading, they will want to read too.

- Involve your family in what you are reading – talk about what you have read and what you liked about the story.
- Encourage friends and family to share books with your child. The more people your child sees reading, the more they will want to read too.

