

Great ways to enjoy reading with your children

Learning to read can be really difficult both for children and for their families wanting to help. What matters is that your child knows books are fun.

If children see reading as an enjoyable activity and want to share books, they are much more likely to develop into fluent readers and do better at school.

Choosing and reading books together at home helps to build confidence and encourages a lifelong enjoyment of books.

Top tips for encouraging children to read

- **Read yourself.** If your child sees you reading, he is more likely to want to join in. This can be anything from books, letters and emails to recipes, newspapers and magazines.
- **Turn off the TV!** It's easier to concentrate if there are no distractions.
- **Add fun and excitement** by linking reading to other activities such as art, craft, sport or music.
- **Try to make time to read together every day** – after school or before bedtime. Listen to your child read and encourage independent reading, but don't be afraid to still tell a bedtime story.
- **Involve other members of the family.** Share the load listening to your child read.
- **Look for words all around you.** Point out labels on food or drinks containers, supermarket notices and road signs.
- **Use a dictionary.** Buy a simple dictionary and use it to check the meanings of new words.
- **Visit your library.** No child is too young to join, it's free and there are hundreds of brightly coloured books to choose from as well as reading challenges and activity sessions to join.
- **Buy books as presents.** Make your child a special place to keep his books.
- **If English isn't your family's first language,** look for dual language books at the library. You can talk about books and stories in any language.
- **Keep in touch with your child's school.** Ask their teacher for suggestions on how you can help with reading and writing.



Top tips for helping children read

- **Encourage them to read things that interest them.** This could include comics, magazines, joke books, poetry and books about pets, crafts or sport.
- **Give them time.** Let them have a go before you correct their mistakes.
- **Encourage them to read with expression.** This will make it more interesting and help them read more fluently.
- **Spot words inside words.** Help them spot words they know within larger more complicated words.
- **Help them get the first sound** or try breaking the word up into smaller sections.
- **Encourage them to follow the words with their finger** and sound out the words (c-a-t: cat).
- **Let them read their favourites.** It's good to let your child read the same books over and over again and helps their confidence to grow.
- **Check they understand the story.** Ask questions about what happens. Look at the cover and pictures for clues and see if they can use their own knowledge to check what they are reading.
- **Don't read for too long.** A good 10 minutes is better than a difficult half hour.
- **Give lots of praise and constant reassurance through smiles and nods.** Let them know it's all right to make mistakes. At the end say something positive like "good", "great", "well done", "brilliant" and tell them exactly what pleased you.

