

Reading at home

Reading at home should be fun and easy – something you both look forward to - a time for laughter and talk.

- Share the reading, take turns or see whether your child wants to read or be read to today
- All children like to be read to, so keep reading to them. You can read in your first language
- Visit the library together and help them choose books to share
- Read emails from family aloud
- Play card and board games together.

Here's a tip - talk a lot to your child while you are doing things together. Use the language that works best for you and your child.

- Talk about pictures in books
- Sing songs, read poems and make up rhymes together – the funnier the better
- Be a role model. Let your child see you enjoying reading and talk about what you are enjoying
- Point out words on signs, shops and labels
- Play word games like "I Spy" and "Simon Says..."

Reading is a great chance for you and your child to spend special time together. Make reading:

- quiet and relaxing
- a time to sit close to your child
- 10–15 minutes without interruption, away from the TV
- an enjoyable, interesting and special time
- a time to praise your child for making an effort

Here's some tips -

If your child is stuck on a word wait a few seconds, give them a chance to think or use their phonics. If they are still stuck, help them to try to work the word out by saying "read the sentence again and think what would make sense". Ask "could it be...?" (and give a word that might fit). The pictures also help them check they have got the right word. If they still can't work out the word, tell them and praise their efforts. Remember, reading should be fun.

Help your child to link stories to their own life. Remind them about what they have done when a similar thing happens in the story.

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- find a comfortable, quiet place away from the TV for the 2 of you to cosy up and read for 10-15 minutes
- if you or your child start to feel stressed, take a break and read the rest of the story aloud yourself – keep it fun
- make some puppets – old socks, cardboard tubes, cut-outs on sticks – that you and your child can use to act out the story you have read. Or dress up and make it into a play
- play card games (you can make the cards yourself)
- read songs, poems and rhymes - sing them together, too.

Here's a tip - when they are reading, your child will still be coming across words they don't know. When this happens, you could remind them to think about what they already know to do when they get stuck. If that doesn't help you might ask "What word would make sense that starts like that?" or "What do you know about that word that might help?" If they still can't work it out – tell them and praise their efforts.

- help them choose books to share
- find other books by the same author or on the same topic (or look for more information on the web – you might have to be the reader for this one).

Here's a tip - help your child to link stories to their own life. Remind them about what they have done when a similar thing happens in the story.

- Talk about the story and the pictures, other stories you have read, and experiences you have both had that are like those in the story
- Sometimes you can be the listener, sometimes the reader and sometimes you can take turns. They might like to read to the cat, the dog, their teddy or a big brother
- All children like to be read to, so don't stop reading to them – no matter how old they are
- Encourage your child to read all sorts of things – the TV guide in the newspaper, street signs, food labels. Simple recipes are great – you get to eat what you've read about, too.

Here's a tip - talk with your child all the time – and give them time to talk with you. You can use your first language.

- Have fun singing along to karaoke songs or playing board games together
- Read to your child every day. You can use your first language
- Have a pile of reading materials available – library books (non-fiction and fiction), kids' cookery books, simple timetables, newspapers and

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magazines, catalogues and any other reading that supports your child's current interest

- Encourage your child to retell favourite stories or parts of stories in their own words. Play card games (you can make the cards yourself) and board games together.

Here are some tips -

When they are reading, your child will be working at solving unfamiliar words by themselves. If they need help you could ask them to work their way across the word looking for things they know that might help such as phonics. At this level, reading involves bringing everything they know together to solve problems and build understanding. If they can't work it out – tell them and carry on with reading.

- Reading makes more sense if your child can relate it to their own life. Help them to make connections between what they are reading and their own lives and experiences. For example, "that's a funny story about a grandad – what does your grandad do that makes you laugh?", "We saw a big mountain in that book, what is our mountain called, and where did the name come from?"
- Look for opportunities for your child to read wherever you are – signs, advertising billboards, junk mail, recipes
- Show your child that reading is fun and important to you by letting them see you reading magazines, books, newspapers.
- Visit the library often and help your child to choose books about topics that interest them
- Talk with older people in your family about interesting stories and people from your child's past that you could find out more about together
- Ask your child questions (and support them to find the answers) to widen their reading experiences. For example, "What's the quickest biscuit recipe?", "What time is the next bus to town?"
- Help your child with any words that they don't understand – look them up together in the dictionary if you need to.
- Get your child to tell you about what they are reading. Who is their favourite character and why? Is there anyone like that in your family? What do they think is going to happen? What have they learnt from their reading? Does it remind them of any of their own experiences?
- Help your child with any words they don't understand – look them up together in the dictionary if you need to

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- Read recipes, instructions, manuals, maps, diagrams, signs and emails. It will help your child to understand that words can be organised in different ways on a page, depending on what it's for
- Read junk mail – your child could compare costs, make their own 'advertisements' by cutting up junk mail or come up with clever sentences for a product they like.
- If your child has chosen something to read that is too hard at the moment, take turns and read it together
- Reading to younger brothers or sisters or grandparents will give your child an opportunity to practise reading out loud
- Encourage other family members to read to and with your child – Auntie, Grandma, cousins.
- Playing board games and card games is important, too
- Choose games that everyone wants to play – make them challenging, not too easy.

Here's some tips -

Keep the magic of listening to a good story alive by reading either made up, retold or read-aloud stories to your child – with lots of excitement through the use of your voice!

When they are reading, the most common difficulty your child is likely to have is working out the meaning of new words, phrases and expressions. To do this your child will use their knowledge of words and word patterns (e.g. prefixes, suffixes and root words) to help build meaning. You may need to remind your child to read back and forward for clues to help their understanding of what they are reading. Talk with your child about the meaning.

- Help your child to choose a variety of books they want to read
- Help them look for books about topics they're learning about at school
- Get your child to choose a book that you can read to them (listening to you read helps them with their reading)
- Encourage your child to retell favourite stories or parts of stories in their own words.
- Ask your child what they are reading and talk about their ideas: What is the 'picture' they have of particular characters? Are there people like that in your family? What do they want to find out from the book? What are the important messages? What do they think is going to happen next? What else do they need to know to understand the story or topic?

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- Talk about books on similar topics. This helps your child to pull together ideas from different places
- Talk about different types of stories that are read or spoken. Newspaper articles, internet sites, proverbs, comics, bible stories, songs, or novels will each have different points you can talk about together. Find a newspaper article you're both interested in and talk about what it means to each of you
- Help your child to share their thinking. Get them to share opinions and talk about why they think that. Listen, even when you don't agree with their ideas.

Here's a tip - give your child space and time to read. Reading longer books they have chosen needs plenty of time.

- Find out information together from different places. For example, manuals, dictionaries, the Internet, magazines, television guides, atlases, family tree information.
- Encourage your child to read to others
- Younger brothers and sisters, or grandparents are great audiences for practising smooth and interesting reading out loud
- Visit the library regularly. Help your child choose books they're interested in (about hobbies, interests or who they are and where they come from) or encourage them to get books out that are about what they are studying at school. They may need you to help by reading to them, as well
- Find books of movies or TV programmes. It can help your child to learn different ways to tell the same story if they read the 'stories' they have watched.
- Talk about what you are reading and why you are enjoying it or what is challenging about it. Read a book to your child that they might find difficult but want to read, and talk about it as you read. Use your first language whenever you can – it can help your child's learning
- Read the same book or magazine as your child. You can then share your ideas about what you have read. You could talk about why the authors made the choices they did when writing the story.
- Have discussions together about books – read the books your child is reading
- Encourage Internet research about topics of interest – notice what they are keen on
- Make your home a reader-friendly home with plenty of books, magazines, newspapers that everyone can read – look for books and magazines at fairs

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and second-hand shops. Ask your family or if they have any they no longer want

- Share what you think and how you feel about the characters, the story or the opinions in magazines and newspapers you are reading. It is important that your child sees you as a reader and you talk about what you are reading.

Here's a tip - encourage your child to read every day. Make reading fun and praise your child's efforts, all the time.

- Reading to your child is one of the most important things you can do, no matter how old they are. You can use your first language
- When you are reading to your child, you can talk about words or ideas in the text that your child might not have come across before
- Children are often interested in new words and what they mean – encourage them to look them up in a dictionary or ask family about the meaning and origin.
- Help your child identify an author, character or series of books they particularly like and find more in the series or by the author
- Talk about the lyrics of songs or the words of poems your child is learning, and see if there are any links to who they are, and where they come from
- Think about subscribing to a magazine on your child's special interest, e.g. animals, or sport, or check out the magazines at the library, or on the Internet
- Go to your local library to choose books together. These might be books your child can read easily by themselves. They might be books your child wants to read but are a bit hard - you can help by reading a page to them, then helping them read the next one

Here's a tip - be a great role model. Let your child see you enjoying reading – whether it's the newspaper, a magazine, a comic, a cook book or a novel. Read in the language that works best for you.