

Helping your child love to read

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Over the next few pages you will find:

- **Tips on bedtime reading and enjoyable pre-bedtime wind down routines.**
- **Suggestions to help get the best of out of books, sharing of stories and assisting your child's reading.**
- **Fun storytelling techniques to help bring stories alive.**

Bedtime Routines

A good night's sleep is the best way to prepare for the day ahead, children under 12 should try to have ten to eleven hours sleep a night.

A bedtime routine will help your child settle, Dr Carol Cooper, mum and GP with over 20 years experience suggests:

- **Agreeing a bed time and sticking to it.**
- **Wind down time – an hour before bedtime.**
- **A warm bath.**
- **A milky drink, before teeth cleaning.**
- **Reading, or being read to.**

If anything has happened during the day that is worrying them, try to talk about it and resolve it before your routine begins.

Music can be a great calming influence to help children drop off quickly, especially if your child doesn't like the dark or silence.

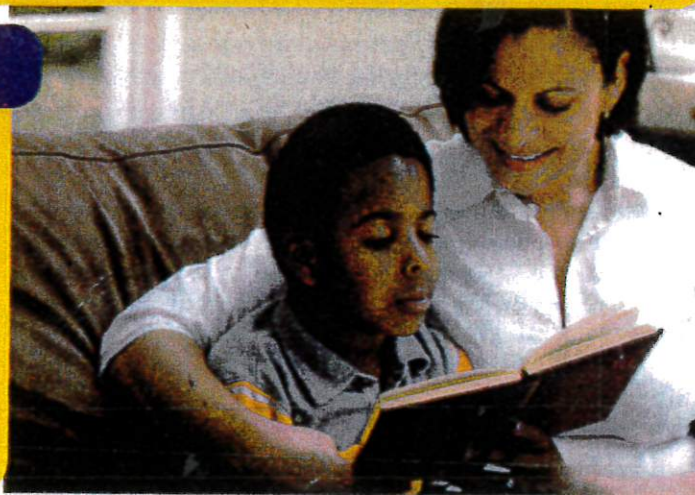
For some children bedtime is not a positive experience. Bedwetting can often be the cause. For some families this can cause much anxiety and frustration. It can also leave children lacking in confidence, tired and less able to concentrate during the day.

If you are concerned about this, you are not alone, bedwetting is more common than you may think. Advice and support can be found at www.drynites.com/uk or by speaking to your school nurse or GP.

Bedtime Reading – Together Time

Reading together at bedtime is part of a bedtime routine that children and parents can greatly benefit from, it encourages bonding and calming and promotes literacy and language skills.

As your child gets older they may no longer wish to be read to and may just want to read alone for ten minutes before 'lights out' – if they do, stories are never wasted and develop a whole wealth of imagination and creativity in your child.



Making your bedtime story reading a pleasure

Ask your child what story they would like to have read – a funny one, magical or a fact book – the important thing to remember is – enjoy it!

Be confident, children don't see our mistakes when read to, so do not ever worry about misreading words or the names of characters. Make them up if need be, most of the time the children will not even notice.

Try to make your voice sound as interesting as possible. Change the tone, pitch and volume for different characters.

If there is a part that is meant to be sung, make up a funny tune.

If you do feel uncomfortable about reading, try pretending to be someone else! Put on a silly hat, funny glasses, or even a different item of clothing – you could link these to your child's favourite book.



Pause after you've read for a while and ask your child to re-cap on what they have heard.

What's happened so far?

Which character do you think is the best and why?

What do they think may happen next?

Once you have finished the book or chapter talk about what part you enjoyed most.

It's good for your child to know that not only did you read the book but that you also enjoyed it too.

Oh no, not again! If you've read a book over and over again why not:

- Make up some new characters or change character names.
- Change the beginning, middle or end of the story.
- Miss out words of the story and ask your child to fill them in for you.

Helping your child with their reading

Reading at home is a way of supporting what is happening at school. Showing your support and encouragement will go a long way.

Before Reading

- Look at the front cover of the book. Ask your child what they think the book is about and why?
- Look at the title. What does your child think may happen?

Whilst Reading

- Ask your child to point to each word whilst reading to remain focused and to remember that each word says something. This helps to ensure they don't miss out any words.

Unknown Words

- Try to sound them out – break them down into 'chunks' of word.
- Use the picture, the pictures can help identify the word.
- If they are simply unable to read the word, tell them!

Helping Out

- If your child is reading quite comfortably then let them continue.
- If your child seems to be getting slower or struggling, take a turn to read a page or sentence – this eases the pressure.

- Try 'pretending' to stumble over a word and see if they can help you with it!

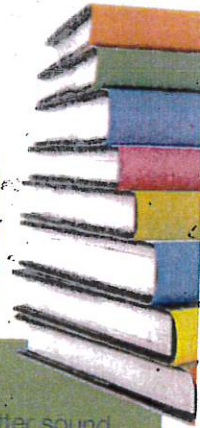
When you've Finished

- Review your initial questions.
- Did they guess right in thinking about what might happen in the story?
- What happened at the beginning?
- What happened at the end?
- Talk about your favourite part and why?
- What did you think of the illustrations?

Literacy and Reading

Literacy - is not just about reading or hearing a child read their school reading book.

Anything can be picked up in the home, looked at or read and talked about. Find something that motivates or inspires your child, something that matches their interests and helps a child to understand what they see and read.



Comic Books

- Read them together.
- Discuss what could happen next.
- Why do you think he / she did that?
- What does he / she mean when they say / said?
- Cut some cartoons out of comics and blank out the words. Now write your own story to go with the pictures.

Looking at Pictures

Discuss what they see in the picture for example:

- How do you know it is winter?
- What is on top of the cupboard?
- Why is the cat licking her lips?

Packets

- Read cereal packets and other packets together.
- Talk about the use of words to advertise the product, is there any clever play on words?
- Does it make you want to buy the product?

Matching Games

- Cut lots of pictures from magazines, comics, sports pages of newspapers or anything else your child is interested in. Write the words to match them and let your child match the words to the pictures.

Spelling Games

- Choose a word with a letter sound in it (e.g. 'ought').
- How many other words can you find with that sound in them?

Sentences

- Play games with the whole family. Who can make a simple sentence sound the most interesting? For example: "The cat sat on the mat" could become "The sleepy white cat sat lazily on the fluffy red door mat."

Continuing a Story

- After reading a chapter together, discuss what you think could/would happen next.

National Year of Reading

- Spend 10 minutes a day reading with your children – no matter how young or old.
- Join your local library! Membership is free, it's easy to sign up and will save you a fortune if your child's reading habit really gets going.
- For more information and resources to support reading, visit www.yearofreading.org.uk

