

Reading with a child

Reading should be an enjoyable and meaningful experience that the child will want to do again. It is an opportunity for your child to use what they know and experience success and enjoyment! Learning to read is like trying to crack a very complex code. Children should be encouraged to look for different clues (pictures, letter sounds, words, meaning and context) to help them understand what they are reading. Learning individual words is important, but they are really aiming to work out the full message.

Things to do

Look at the front cover. Talk about the author, the illustrator and the title. Read the title to the child if necessary so they do not stumble at the first hurdle. Use the picture to chat about the story and discuss what it may be about.

Be positive. Praise the child and tell them know what they have done well. Let them know that it is all right to make mistakes.

Give them time. Let them make a guess before you tell them the word. Help them to work the word out by saying the first sound and thinking about the story, looking at the picture or breaking the word into smaller parts or use meaning to work out best fit.

Point with a finger. Encourage a child who is at the early stages of reading to match the words with their finger. When the child becomes a better reader and is able to match all of the words with their finger tell them to take it away and point with their eyes. An able reader should NOT be pointing at the words unless they are stuck.

Ask lots of questions. Check that they understand what they are reading. Talk about the characters and how they might feel. Does the child have a favourite character? Discuss the plot and predict what might happen next or how it might end. Which part does the child like the best, why? Can they think of another way the story could have ended?

Show them how to do it. Read parts of the book that they find difficult. Read using fluency or expression or resting at the full stops to show them how it should sound. On occasion, if a child is reluctant to read or finding it all too difficult then read the book to them at the early stages or they read a page/you read a page as confidence grows.

Phrases to use

You said.... Was that right?

You said.... Does that make sense?

Does it look right and sound right?

Would 'cat' start like that?

Good try - did it make sense?

Good try - did that sound right?

Let's try reading that word again looking carefully all the way through it

Put it all together so that it sounds like talking - listen to me do it then you have a go

Read it smoothly

Remember to stop at the full stops then get ready for the next part (crucial for phrased and fluent reading)

Remember to change your voice when you see these marks (point to punctuation - ? ! "...." **bold type**)

Try that again and listen to yourself. Check it sounded right.

Were you right?

Well done, you had a go!

Well done, you used expression/made it sound like talking

Good, you corrected yourself

I like how you re-read that bit! Check that you got it right and made it sound good.

Good! (say this at the exact moment that they do something good in their reading e.g. use expression, self-correct, reread, use sounds etc)

Listen to yourself telling the story. Does it sound good? Are you listening to yourself tell the story?