

Helping your Child at Home

Reading

For many children learning to read happens easily and naturally and unlocks the key to all sorts of stories and information. For children who are struggling the best way to help is to be patient and encourage different ways of building up reading skills at home e.g. by:-

- Looking up favourite TV programmes in a newspaper
- Finding out where a football team is in the league
- Making a scrapbook around your child's interests

Reading to your child is important – it leads to discussions about new words and sequences of events – and helps develop language skills.

When you share a story with your child please ...

- DO try to spend about 10 minutes reading each evening
- DO try to find a time that is convenient to both of you
- DO sit comfortably close together
- DO give time to look at the pictures
- DO talk about the pictures and the story
- DO try to make reading fun

BUT

- DON'T have the television on
- DON'T make a fuss over mistakes
- DON'T compare your child with other children

See below for notes on home reading.

Spelling

When children are learning to write there are lots of things to consider. First we want them to be able to express themselves in written form as well as they can, then we can build up skills of handwriting and spelling

The method generally recommended for helping with spellings is called the

“Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check” method

- Look – encourage your child to say each letter sound or syllable
- Say - the word out loud
- Cover – with your hand or a book
- Write – your child tries to write the word from memory
- Check – check against their original copy

Maths

Make the most of opportunities at home. Talk about weights and amounts when you cook. Talk about prices when you shop. Talk about time and distances when you are travelling.

Play games – card games or board games or home made games.

Visit www.dfes.gov.uk/parents for more information on helping at home.

Notes for Parents on Home Reading

Your child will bring home a book, which has either been carefully selected with the help of his/her teacher or one that is of their own choice, from the class library. We hope that this will be a pleasurable way for you to help your child to learn to read and, above all, to love books.

Choosing the Books

In the early stages of learning to read your child's teacher will closely monitor the choice of books sent home, gauging the level of difficulty to suit each child's individual needs. We use a wide range of books to allow for each child's personal interests and to extend their vocabulary, knowledge and experience. What suits one child does not necessarily suit another. Our main aim is to nurture the enjoyment of books so that your child wants to read. Children are also encouraged to select freely from the library. It is important that your child chooses the book himself/herself. Please do not be concerned if it seems too easy, or too difficult. Just follow the guidelines on "How the reading is done" and read accordingly. You may find that your child will occasionally choose a book he/she has read before – this is quite natural as we all have our favourite books.

When and Where to Read

Choose a time and place which suits you both where you can feel relaxed and comfortable. Have as few distractions as possible and read for as long as suits you both. Aim to read regularly at a time when your child is not too tired or pre-occupied. Remember to encourage your child to read but do not force participation.

How the Reading is Done

The age of your child and the type of book he/she chooses will influence the way it is read. There are general methods you and your child can choose.

1. Paired Reading

Place the book so that you can both see it clearly. Let your child point to the words from below while you point from above – then you both read the story aloud saying the words together. Read slowly enough for your child to keep pace. Make the story sound exciting. Don't worry if your child makes mistakes or doesn't know many words – just keep on reading and enjoying the story together.

2. Shared Reading

Read the story first to your child – this is not cheating! It is helping him/her to know what the story is about. Do not correct every mistake your child makes. If the word house is read instead of home do not correct, as the text has been understood. On the other hand if he/she reads, " He got on his house and rode away", obviously the sense has been lost. Ask the child to re-read the sentence.

Share the book by reading alternately. This may be a page or chapter each or child one night, parent the next. The choice is yours.

3. Reading Alone

If your child chooses to read independently please take an active interest in the book. Valuable questions to ask would be: -

What was the story about?

Who were the main characters?

What was your favourite bit?

It is important that you are involved with your child's reading whatever their age.

4. Reading to your Child

Your child may wish you to read the book to him/her. Involve the child as much as possible by talking about the pictures and the story. A valuable question is "What do you think will happen now?"

5. Changing Books

Please ensure that books are kept in your child's book bag and returned to school when you need a different book. Books are expensive to replace and it is important that your child learns to value and care for their books.

If possible try to find a safe place to keep the book bag and establish good routines so your child learns the need to care and to appreciate the value of books.

If you are concerned in any way about the choice of books, methods of reading or the reading progress of your child please do not hesitate to discuss this with your child's teacher. A problem shared is often a problem solved!

One more point – It is important for you to read to your child however good he/she may be. Children learn by example so why not try to find a time when the whole family can read quietly and enjoy books. The main thing is that you are enjoying books together.

SO READ AND HAVE FUN!