

Helping your child with reading at home

There are 3 important ways to help your child become a better reader:

1. **You read** so that children see you as a reader.
2. **Read stories to your child** (such as picture story books or part of a chapter book).
This is a great way to help children hear how reading sounds and help them develop their thinking about storylines.
3. Listen to your child read **EVERY DAY**.



Further ways to help:

Before reading a book:

- Look at the front cover and predict what might happen.
- Look slowly through the book and discuss the pictures. Mention some of the words from the text as you go, to get your child tuned into the language. Can they find any words or sounds they know? Can they find any Magic 100 Words (M100W)?

While reading a book:

- Make sure your child is **pointing** to every word as they read.
- Encourage your child to **look at the pictures** – NEVER cover them. This is vital information right now.
- Encourage your child to look at the beginning letters and **say the sound** (the sounds they make, not their name). This can help them predict what the word may be.
- Encourage your child to **listen to what they are reading** and make sure that it is **making sense** (engage them in the story).
- When your child comes to a word they don't know:
 - Encourage them to sound out the word using the sounds they know.
 - What word would make sense there?
 - Go back and read the sentence again to see if it makes sense.
 - Read to the end of the sentence and then reread to see if the word can be worked out.

Questions to ask your child (and encourage your child to ask themselves) as they read:

1. Does it make sense?
2. Does it sound right?
3. Does it look right?

After reading a book:

It is really important to check that your child has understood what they have read.

To do this, you can ask some questions such as:

(Encourage your child to refer back to the book if necessary)

- Can you tell me about the part you liked?
- What happened when...? What makes you think that...?
- How did...? How do you know that...?
- Why did...? How do you know that...?
- What do you think about...? How do you know that...?
- How did the story end?

To further assist you, we have explained the 7 reading strategies that children will be using as their reading develop.

1. **Look at the picture** – it is good for your child to use the picture when reading. It helps them to keep track of the meaning of the story and to make predictions when trying to work out unknown words. Get your child to look at all of the pictures before they start reading to give them an idea of what the story is about. Discuss the pictures with your child. Encourage your child to look at the pictures if they get stuck on a word.
2. **Get your mouth ready** – Picture clues alone will not provide enough information for your child as they progress. Ask them to say the first sound or sounds in an unknown word and to think about the story at the same time. This can help them to predict an unknown word. They can then check whether their guess makes sense.

3. **Does it look right?** – By looking at a word from left to right, your child can check their predictions about an unknown word. They can confirm their prediction based on looking at letter-sound relationships, or, reject their prediction and try again e.g. A child predicts *house* for *home*. When checking through the word, the child will notice the *m* and realise that this cannot be house. You may need to help your child notice this at first.
4. **Does it make sense?** – Your child may have a go at working out unknown words and can decide if they are correct (by thinking about whether it makes sense). Your child needs to work at realising when the reading doesn't make sense anymore and reread the sentence again to have another go at an unknown word. When stuck on a word, ask your child to look at the picture and predict what the word might be and check that the guess makes sense.
5. **Reread** – When reading, if an error is made, ask your child to reread the whole sentence. Always encourage your child to reread to check their predictions and to regain the meaning if they get mixed up.
6. **Does it sound right?** – This strategy encourages your child to think about how we say words in English. They need to think about whether we say things that way, e.g. do we sat comed or sawed?
7. **Look for chunks** – After your child has mastered *getting your mouth ready* with the initial letters of an unknown word, encourage them to look for chunks of letters and use those. e.g. to/geth/er, f/ar/m/er. They may only need to use the first or first and second chunk, to work out the word. Chunking of letters needs to be done with the story in mind.

Finally, and most importantly – make reading with your child and enjoyable and fun experience!

