

Reading at Home: Information for parents/carers

The most important thing you can do for your child is to make books and reading fun. If your child is reluctant to read, little and often is the best approach!

Listening to audiobooks, reading to your child and sharing a book together all count as reading. All are important in becoming a fluent reader, developing vocabulary and understanding ‘book language’.

Look out for more information about using audiobooks with your child in our next publication. Here are some ideas to engage your child:

# Reading a familiar book

Your child may like to re-read a familiar book to you. This allows your child to read fluently with expression and most importantly builds confidence. You can then concentrate on praising them for their excellent reading skills.

For example, ‘*I loved how your voice got really angry’, ‘You are good at speaking different character voices’.* Always ask a comprehension question to encourage engagement with the book.

Some examples might be*: ‘I wonder why they did that? ‘What do you think might happen next?’ ‘What does the word* ***startled*** *mean?’ ‘Let’s try to think of other words that mean the same.’*

# Starting a new book

When starting a new book, it will be important to look at it together first. This gives you the opportunity to problem solve any words that may potentially be difficult for your child. The strategies below will help your child to read for meaning, as they will have an idea about the storyline and will be more engaged with the book.

Some ideas for a book introduction are:

* Look through the book first, before you share it with your child, so you know the storyline and which words you want to discuss.
* Read the title and ask them what they think the book might be about.
* Look at the pictures on each page and discuss what you think might be happening in the story.
* If there is a word you think your child might have difficulties reading, use the word when discussing the pictures and point to it. Practise saying the word aloud. Can they point to the word anywhere else in the story?
* Discuss the meaning of words that you think your child might not know. Point to the word while saying it before you discuss its meaning.
* Leave the last page as a surprise. Instead of turning to look at it you could ask them how they think the story might finish.
* Phonic books are good for boosting confidence, as the words can be worked out but make sure the book you’ve chosen isn’t too difficult.

# Sharing a book

This way of reading takes all anxiety away from the child and allows them to join in when they feel confident. Here are some ideas on sharing a book:

* Use picture clues to work out tricky words in the context of the sentence.
* Talk about any pictures or diagrams and use these to develop vocabulary, for example a picture of a castle can be used to talk about the different parts of the castle and what they are called.
* You could read each page to your child first to build confidence. This will also help with fluency and reading expression.
* Shared reading - you read along with your child until they feel confident to continue alone (by giving a sign, such as touching your arm). Step in again as soon as they get stuck, until they signal they are happy to continue alone.
* Paired reading - you take turns to read a sentence or paragraph. This gives your child a chance to listen and follow the text as you read and can help them with expression and tricky words.
* A ‘dyslexia-friendly’ book can support older or more independent readers, as the page colour, font and spacing are more suitable for readers with dyslexia and the chapters are short, giving children a sense of achievement.
* Try reading joke, riddle and quiz books with your child. These are great for improving general knowledge and reading comprehension and help children to find reading fun.
* Read a ‘harder’ book to your child. Talk about the pictures, characters and make predictions about what will happen next. These activities encourage engagement with stories and reading and improve comprehension skills.



#  Ideas for older children/teenagers

* When your child/teenager is choosing a book to read independently, encourage them to use the ‘5 Finger Rule’: choose a page; if there are more than five words on the page they can’t read, it will be too hard for independent reading, but it can still be shared and enjoyed with you.
* They may prefer reading non-fiction around an area of interest.
* Reading material doesn’t always have to be book-based. Things to try are magazines, comics, online blogs, webpages and ‘everyday’ reading, such as, menus, catalogues, instruction manuals, match programmes, recipe books.
* Abridged and illustrated versions of classic texts being read in school will give an overview of plot and an understanding of the characters while being easier to read.

# Three strategies to try when your child is reading to you

(Taken from: Supporting Children’s Reading: Hughes and Guppy)

Wait and See: reading on and using independent strategies

When your child misreads a word, try not to jump in with the correct word, or ask them to re-read straightaway, as this stops the flow of reading and doesn’t give them an opportunity to self-correct from information further on in the sentence or paragraph.

If the mistake has changed the sense of the sentence and they do not self-correct, you could take them back to the word at the end of the sentence or paragraph and approach it using one of the strategies below or give them the word.

Some mistakes – slips of the tongue – may make hardly any difference at all and can usually be ignored.

Thumb it: helping your child to use clues from the wider context

Cover the problem word with your thumb. Do this from above the word, so as not to hide the next few lines.

Read the whole sentence to your child, except the problem word.

Say the word ‘something’ in place of the problem word, to keep the sentence flowing.

Read as naturally as possible.

Covering the word with your thumb draws attention away from the letters of the word and directs it to wider clues. This puts your child in charge of problem solving. There is often a lot of information after the word. Armed with this, your child can go back to the word. Meaning and phonics can work together, giving your child a better chance of reading the word correctly.

Start it: teaching your child how to combine skills

Re-read up to the problem word, and start building it, using one or more of its initial sounds. If this is not enough to trigger the word, once again re-read up to the word, again build the first part, but this time read on to the end of the sentence.

Using phonics and meaning together in this way shows your child how to combine the clues to read the word: the phonic clue is provided by building the beginning of the word; the meaning clue is provided by the natural reading of the words around the problem word.

**If your child is still unable to read the problem word, praise the effort they’ve made in trying to work it out and give them the word without further discussion.**

# Where to find eBooks

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Suffolk Libraries through the [Libby app](https://www.overdrive.com/apps/libby/). Some Read Along titles are available



Click [here](https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page) to access Oxford Owl - Free tablet-friendly eBooks for primary-aged children, including phonic books, which are linked to schools’ phonic programmes, such as Letters and Sounds and ReadWrite Inc.



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# Other books

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