



# A Reading Guide for Parents

The ability to read fluently, with understanding and for pleasure is the most important academic gift we can give our children. For parents, learning about how we teach reading at school, supporting this process at home and enjoying sharing the written word with your children is one of the best ways of helping with their happy and successful progress through school.

We hope that this booklet will give you some useful background information and ideas about reading at home with your child. Please do not hesitate to come and see us if you need any further help or advice.

*"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents."*

— Emilie Buchwald

## First things first...

Helping your child with reading doesn't just mean listening to him / her reading a school reading book, although this is of course vitally important!

Here are some other ways of developing reading skills in your child:

Talk and listen to your child

Make time for discussion – of a TV programme, a news item, a film, during a walk, over a meal, in the car, at bath-time

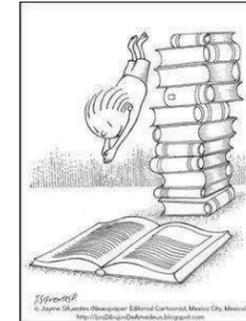
Read stories, poems and other texts aloud to your child – and don't deny yourself the pleasure of reading more challenging texts to older children

Let your child see you reading for purpose and pleasure

Visit the library / bookshops

Listen to stories on CDs, the radio, the internet

Give your child access to a wide variety of written material: books, magazines, websites, recipes, instructions, TV guides, catalogues, games



*"Great books help you understand, and they help you feel understood."*

John Green

## General Strategies for Reading at Home

Find a really good time for reading practice – five minutes of quality time, when you can give your full attention to your child, is better than longer periods when neither of you are fully concentrating

Talk about the book with your child before reading – you could introduce any words that you think your child will struggle with or any words he or she may not yet understand

If your child is finding a book difficult, don't ask him / her to sound out every word - focus on words you know that your child can decode

Sometimes read with your child (paired reading) or take it in turns to read a page

'Book Talk' is an essential part of the shared reading experience (see below for useful tips!)

Give plenty of praise and let your child know that you are enjoying listening to the text

Co-opt other people in to listen to your child read – grandparents, friends, visitors

Keep reading sessions short and enjoyable – reading should never be a chore!

Your fluent Key Stage 2 reader needs as much help as your beginner in Reception – see the 'Book Talk' and 'Reading for Meaning' sections for ideas

*"Make it a rule never to give a child a book you would not read yourself." George Bernard Shaw*

Keep anxiety levels down. Learning to read involves complicated skills, and these can soon go to pieces if a child gets worried.

Build confidence. Think back to what it was like when you were learning to drive or mastering a sport. There were probably times when you wanted to give up, so needed lots of encouragement.

When your child gets stuck see if they can work it out by themselves. If they can't, you might want to just tell them the word, to keep the flow of reading going. But at other times you can use simple prompts to help them. Sometimes, none of this will work, because you've come to one of those many tricky English words that don't follow phonic rules like 'the', 'said', 'once' and 'was'. In this case you might encourage your child to sound out as much of the word as they can.

Play with sounds. There are lots of simple games you can play to help build your child's phonological awareness and phonic knowledge.

Give your child ownership.– let them hold the book, finger point etc.

Don't interrupt the flow of the reading. Only address errors at the end of the chunk of reading

If the pitch of the book is correct, then the adult talk can be minimal until the child has finished reading

Keep to a maximum of 15 minutes.

## ***Reading for Meaning***

Learning to decode words gives children access to our literate world, but we need to understand what we are reading in order to be able to make use of it. As your child grows in confidence as a reader, our teaching at school places less emphasis on simply decoding texts and more emphasis on understanding them. We call this **reading comprehension**.

Some of the key skills of reading comprehension are:

‘Skim reading’ a text to pick out important or useful information

Understanding the writer’s meaning and intention

Knowing what devices the writer uses to make the meaning clear (this could be sub-titles in a non-fiction text, short sentences to create atmosphere in a scary story or metaphors in a poem)

Having a wide vocabulary and being interested in finding out the meanings of new words

Being able to express an opinion about a text and backing it up with examples and quotations

Using inference to give informed opinions about a text (using clues from the text to understand something that is implied by the author but not directly stated).

“You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child.” Dr. Seuss

## **Useful Prompts for Supporting Readers**

*Prompts are used to help a child become a more independent reader. These can be used for a child having reading difficulties at any level.*

***To help the child attend to print and look closer at words-***

Would X start like that?

Put your finger under that word and check the first letter.

Check the end of that word.

Check the middle of the word.

***To help the child locate a tricky part-***

Can you find the tricky word on that page / line?

What would you expect to see at the beginning of X?

Do you see a chunk in that word that would help you?

***To attend to fluency***

Try to out two or three words together to make it sound smooth.

Put the words together to make it sound like talking.

***If the child added or deleted words-***

Did you run out of words?

Did you have too many words?

Read it with your finger. Did it match?

Point to each word.

***If the child is stuck on an unknown word-***

Can you find the tricky word?

Read it again and think about the story.

Look at the first letter(s).

Do you think it looks like 'went'?  
Do you know a word that ends / begins with those letters?  
Do you know a word that looks like that?  
Use your eyes and think about it.  
Look for something that would help you.  
What can you see that might help?  
Do you know a word that looks like that?

***If the child misreads a word and stops–***

What's wrong?  
Why did you stop?  
Would \_\_\_\_\_ fit there?  
Would \_\_\_\_\_ make sense?  
Do you think it looks like \_\_\_\_\_?  
What could you try?  
Check the picture.  
Where is the hard bit?  
What did you notice?  
Run a finger under it while you say it slowly.

***After an error that the child does not notice–***

It could be \_\_\_\_\_, but look at \_\_\_\_\_. (1st letter etc)  
Check it. Does it look right and sound right to you?  
You almost got that. See if you can find what is wrong.  
Try that again.  
Something wasn't quite right.  
What's wrong with this? (Repeat what child said)  
You said \_\_\_\_\_. Does that make sense?

***To reinforce the recognition of words–***

Can you find \_\_\_\_\_? (A known or a new word)  
Can you find the same word on this / a previous page?  
To reinforce the child's self-correction behaviour-  
I liked the way you worked that out.

How did you know to change \_\_\_\_\_?  
You made a mistake. Can you find it?  
You're nearly right. Try that again.

***To sound like good reading-***

Are you listening to yourself?  
Did it sound good?  
Let's put 'here comes' together.  
Can you read this quickly?  
Put all the words together so that it sounds like talking.  
How would you say that?  
Make it sound like a favourite book.  
Read it all smoothly.  
Make your voice go down at the end of the sentence.  
Change your voice when you see these marks on the page. (! ? “ ”)  
Can you talk like Baby Bear?

***Useful prompts when unjumbling the sentence***

*If stuck–* Read the story to me. (A copy will be written by the teacher on a sticky note at front of the scrapbook.)  
*If the child can't remember the sentence at all say–* It's about \_\_\_\_\_, and / or, It begins \_\_\_\_\_.  
Fantastic, but there are 2 words in the wrong place. Check it again.  
Two words began with the same letter. How did you know which one to put there?  
Where is the full-stop?  
Where is the capital letter?  
How many words do you have?  
How many letters are in the longest word? (Many children confuse letters and words.)  
Can you see any words that begin / end the same?  
Do you have any words that are the same?  
Did you have any of these words in other stories?  
Can you see a small word inside this word? E.g. going

**Please note:** *Do not overwhelm a child with prompts. They are only included as some parents ask how they can help at home. Too many prompts get in the way of maintaining meaning.*

**Some useful reading prompts:**

- Look at the picture. Can it help you? (e.g. What is the bird doing? Where is it?)
- Get your mouth ready with the 1st sound in the word. (e.g. The bird is on the t\_\_\_\_)
- Think of what word would make sense that starts with that letter. (e.g. tiny? tree?)
- Still stuck? Look for chunks in the word that might help you read it. (e.g. tr-ee)
- Try skipping over the hard word and reading to the end of the sentence. Now go back and reread. Keep thinking about what word would make sense in that sentence. (e.g. The bird is on the t\_\_\_ in a nest.)
- When you think you know what the tricky word is, crosscheck your reading by thinking: 1 Does it make sense? 2 Does it look right? 3 Does it sound right?

*“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” Frederick Douglass*

**PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE!**

Don't forget to catch the child using good reading strategies and praise them by saying,

'I like the way you.....' or 'Great job. You reread that and fixed the tricky part all by yourself.'

We even need to praise a child for pausing after an error because the pause tells us that they recognise something is wrong.

Praise successful attempts

I like the way you read that but did you notice that there were some other words there?

Good try. You were thinking about what makes sense but the writer chose a different word in that sentence. You said ----- Can you spot the word on the page?

I like the way you went back to the beginning and thought about what would make sense. That's what good readers do.

It was a good idea to use the first letter to get that word.

**Don't....**

Say 'Good work.' Or 'Well done.' 10 times a page. It interrupts the flow and fluency. It makes the child focus on the adult not on the book. It slows down the reading.

*“You know you've read a good book when you turn the last page and feel a little as if you have lost a friend.” Paul Sweeney*

### **If it's all getting a bit too stressful...**

Try paired reading (taking it in turns to read a page / paragraph / chapter)

Don't expect perfection – maintaining the *sense* of the book is more important than correcting every single mistake

Keep reading sessions short and enjoyable – make them a really treasured part of the day!

### **Where next?**

*“ Why don't you read something...*

*...harder?*

*...with less pictures?*

*...by another author?*

*...from the school library?*

*...that's not a comic / Xbox game / football magazine / ipad!?”*

It can be frustrating if your child often chooses to read texts that seem too easy for him / her or texts that would not be considered of the highest literary quality!

Try 'drip feeding' your child a wider range of literature through:

Reading more challenging books **to** him / her

Watching the beginning of a TV or film adaptation to 'whet the appetite'

Providing accessible but informative non-fiction about a topic in which the child is currently interested (websites are useful for this) offering a wider range of books

### **Effective Readers**

Reread when they have not understood

Monitor and resolve problems on the run

Extract meaning from text – literal and inferential

Visualise – translate what they're reading into mental images

Predict and recap

Respond to texts

Make connections with other books, experiences

Attend to punctuation and read aloud in a phrased and fluent manner

Summarise their learning

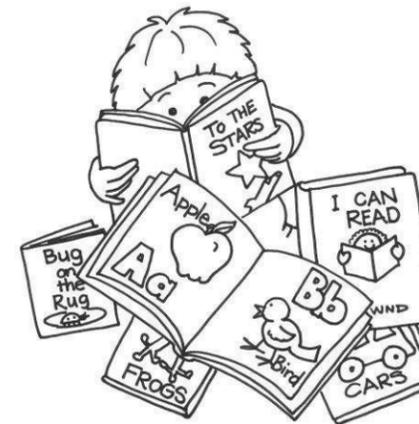
Identify the main ideas or key information

### **Poor Readers**

Decode / sound out unknown words letter by letter and fail to grasp the meaning of large passages of text

Pay little attention to punctuation

Don't chunk the reading into phrases



### **Questions you could use in Book Talk**

Why do you think X (character) did that?

How do you think X is feeling?

Tell me about the story so far.

What has been the most exciting part?

What do you think will happen next? What makes you think that?

How would you describe X (character, place, problem etc.)?

How do you think the author wants us to feel at this moment? How are they trying to do that?

Are there any words that you're not sure of?

Have you experienced anything similar to X? Are there any other stories like this?

Would you recommend this book? Why?

How do you know X (character, place etc.) is Y?

What do you notice about X?

What kind of books would you like to read more of?

What do you think of the style of writing?

Can you sum up X in 3 words?

### **Phonics - The Actions**

**s** Weave hand in an s shape, like a snake, and say *ssssss*.

**a** Wiggle fingers above elbow as if ants crawling on you and say *a, a, a*.

**t** Turn head from side to side as if watching tennis and say *t, t, t*.

**i** Pretend to be a mouse by wiggling fingers at end of nose and squeak *i, i, i*.

**p** Pretend to puff out candles and say *p, p, p*.

**n** Make a noise, as if you are a plane – hold arms out and say *nnnnnn*.

**ck** Raise hands and snap fingers as if playing castanets and say *ck, ck, ck*.

**e** Pretend to tap an egg on the side of a pan and crack it into the pan, saying *eh, eh, eh*.

**h** Hold hand in front of mouth panting as if you are out of breath and say *h, h, h*.

**r** Pretend to be a puppy holding a piece of rag, shaking head from side to side, and say *rrrrrr*.

**m** Rub tummy as if seeing tasty food and say *mmmmm*.

**d** Beat hands up and down as if playing a drum and say *d, d, d*.

**g** Spiral hand down, as if water going down the drain, and say *g, g, g*.

**o** Pretend to turn light switch on and off and say *o, o; o, o*.

**u** Pretend to be putting up an umbrella and say *u, u, u*.

**l** Pretend to lick a lollipop and say *lllll*.

**f** Let hands gently come together as if toy fish deflating, and say *fffff*.

**ai** Cup hand over ear and say *ai, ai, ai*.

- j** Pretend to wobble on a plate and say *j, j, j*.
- oa** Bring hand over mouth as if you have done something wrong and say *oh!*
- ie** Stand to attention and salute, saying *ie ie*.
- ee or** Put hands on head as if ears on a donkey and say *eeyore, eeyore*.
- z** Put arms out at sides and pretend to be a bee, saying *zzzzzz*.
- w** Blow on to open hand, as if you are the wind, and say *wh, wh, wh*.
- ng** Imagine you are a weightlifter, and pretend to lift a heavy weight above your head, saying *ng...*
- v** Pretend to be holding the steering wheel of a van and say *vvvvvv*.
- oo oo** Move head back and forth as if it is the cuckoo in a cuckoo clock, saying *u, oo; u, oo*. (Little and long oo.)
- y** Pretend to be eating a yoghurt and say *y, y, y*.
- x** Pretend to take an x-ray of someone with a camera and say *ks, ks, ks*.
- ch** Move arms at sides as if you are a train and say *ch, ch, ch*.
- sh** Place index finger over lips and say *shshsh*.
- th th** Pretend to be naughty clowns and stick out tongue a little for the th, and further for the th sound (this and thumb).
- qu** Make a duck's beak with your hands and say *qu, qu, qu*.
- ou** Pretend your finger is a needle and prick thumb saying *ou, ou, ou*.
- oi** Cup hands around mouth and shout to another boat saying *oi!*  
*ship ahoy!*
- ue** Point to people around you and say *you, you, you*.
- er** Roll hands over each other like a mixer and say *ererer*.