



Reading Tips

Taking an active interest in your child's learning is one of the best ways you can help your child to do better in school and in life. Learning is not just about what happens in school. Children are learning all the time through what they see, hear and do.

A little reading goes a long way!

- Remember: a good 10 minutes is much better than a difficult half hour!
- Plan a quality, quiet time to read together.

Strategies and Reading Behaviours

In school children are taught a range of strategies they can use to help them work out unknown words.

For example:

- Phonics! If they can sound the word out using the phonics they know then encourage this as the first strategy
- Uses the picture as a clue (this is not cheating!)
- Uses picture clues along with the initial letter in the word
- Predicts what the word could be from the context it is in

As children's reading skills develop they adopt a range of good reading behaviours. These include:

- Reading from left to right and matches each spoken word to a written one
- Recognises errors
- Re-reading to correct and re-reading to check
- Making meaningful but not always accurate guesses
- Reading with expression

Progress allows them to:

- Use punctuation
- Follow print with their eyes
- Search for information in the print
- Read more fluently
- Use letter clusters to attempt new words

Reading with your child

Book Introduction: Spend time introducing the book (see Questions to help you get more from your child's reading book sheet)

Strategy Check: Ask your child "What can we do if we get stuck on a word?" Listing the strategies refreshes your child's memory and gives them the confidence to tackle a new word.

Independent reading: During this time try to remind your child of strategies rather than giving unknown words.

Returning to text for questioning: This is an important part of the reading session as it enables you to see if they have understood what they have read. More confident readers will also be able to return to the text to find out answers to questions.

Important point to remember

- Allow your child to read to the end of a sentence without interrupting.
- Share the title rather than asking them to read it if the words are unfamiliar.
- Remind your child to point to each word individually rather than continuously run their finger underneath if they are still learning to match one to one.
- Alternate saying well done or that was good by telling your child what was good.
- Remember not to expect your child to work out a word that is not in their vocabulary.
- Alternate the strategies you suggest rather than giving the same strategy prompt e.g. sound it out.

Here are some questions you can ask your child about their reading; choose a few each night to engage in conversation with your child about their nightly independent reading.

Before reading:

- Looking at the title, cover and illustrations/pictures, what do you think will happen in this book?
- What makes you think that?
- What characters do you think might be in the book?
- Do you think there will be problem in the story? Why?
- What do you already know about the topic of this book?
- Does the topic or story relate to you or your family? How?
- Do you think it will be like any other book you've read? If so, which one, and how do you think it will be similar?

During reading:

- What has happened so far in the story? Can you tell me using sequence words? (first, then, next, after, finally, etc.)
- What do you predict will happen next?
- How do you think the story will end?
- Why do you think the character did _____?
- What would you have done if you were the character?
- How would you have felt if you were the character?
- When you read, what pictures did you see in your head? How did you imagine it looked like?
- What are you wondering about as you read? What questions do you have?
- Think about the predictions you made before reading; do you still think the story will go that way? Why or why not? How do you think it will go now?

After reading:

- Why is the title a good title for the book/story? If you had to give it a different title, what would be another good title for it?
- Were your predictions correct? Where did you have to fix your prediction as you read?
- If there was a problem, did it get solved? How did the character try to solve the problem?
- What happened because of the problem?
- Did any of the characters change through the story? Who changed, and how did they change?
- Why do you think the author wrote this?
- What is the most important point that the author is trying to make in his/her writing?
- What was your favourite part? Why?
- If you could change one part, what would you change?

- If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask?
- Can you retell the story in sequence order (use your fingers and sequence words: first, second, then, next, etc.)
- Is there a character in the story that reminds you of someone you know? If so, who are they like, and why do you think that?
- Does this book remind you of another book you know? Does it remind you of something you've experienced in real life?

For fun:

Have them act out a scene from the book, draw you a picture of their favourite part to decorate the refrigerator, or write a follow-up story. They can pretend they are a book reviewer reviewing the book on TV, or they can write a letter or postcard to the author. There are many creative ways to engage students in reading and have them share their reading with you! Most of all, encourage a love of reading!