



On the Road to Reading

Inside



Handy tips for supporting your beginning reader



Why is reading to your child still so important?

What is your role when your child reads to you?

What should you do when they need help?

The Power of Praise

Finger Pointing – When is it time to stop?

The Dual Purpose of Home Reading

Home reading serves a dual purpose - one is reading to your child and the other involves your child reading to you. Both aspects of home reading are pivotal to your child's success as a reader.

Reading to your child teaches children the value and importance of reading. It provides children with opportunities to hear fluent reading, the rhythm of language and exposes children to new vocabulary.

When your child reads to you it creates a safe environment for children to rehearse the strategies they have learnt in class. This form of home reading aims to reinforce, stimulate and motivate students to become confident readers.





*'Reading aloud
to children
deposits literary
language into
their minds'*

Linda Dorn

When You Read to Your Child...

Reading aloud to your child is a great way to build a life-long love of reading and ensures your child continues to learn important language and literacy skills – even after they have started learning to read at school!

Before reading:

Before opening the book, look at the cover and talk together about what this book might be about. This is called 'making predictions' and is an important comprehension strategy your child will learn at school. Then, open the book for a quick 'picture walk' through the pages, confirming or revising your predictions.

During reading:

Most importantly, read with passion! Provide a good model of fluent, expressive reading and show that reading is a great way to have fun. Think aloud as you read, asking a few questions as you go.... "What do you think is going to happen next?" "Why did that character do that?" "What would you do?" – But be cautious! Too much questioning can turn a fun read into an inquisition – and that's no fun at all!

After reading:

Talk about what you've read and explore new and interesting words and ideas together.

Some suggestions for selecting good books:

- Choose books that your child cannot read on their own, providing an opportunity for them to hear more complex language and interesting words not found in early readers.
- Get books that rhyme, and books with clear attractive illustrations and strong text.
- Choose books and download material on subjects your child is interested in.
- Check on-line for lists of award winning books for children.
- Explore different types of reading material - information books, picture books, cook books, poetry, newspapers, magazines, mini-chapter books



When Your Child Reads to You...

This is the time for your child to proudly share with you his/her growing skill in learning to read – usually using books chosen by his/her class teacher for ‘home reading’.

The purpose of home reading is to build ‘reading mileage’ and to practice using the reading strategies taught at school. The reading book provided is purposefully pitched at an ‘easy’ level, and may have been read before at school. This is by clever design. Nothing breeds success like success and the home reading experience should always be a ‘showcase’ opportunity for your child – not a battleground.

Remember, your child’s teacher will be introducing new books during reading instruction at school - at just the right level of challenge for your child. Reading at home should be easy!

Your role as parent is to be an interested audience, engaging with the meaning of the story or information. Your interactions should be in response to what’s happening in the book, with only an occasional need to give help.

Our handy prompt sheet on the following page will help you know what to say (and what NOT to say!) if your child needs a little help.

*"The more that
you read, the
more things
you will know.
The more you
learn, the more
places you'll
go."
Dr. Seuss*

(IMPORTANT: If your child needs too much assistance, the text level is not suitable. You should finish the book by reading along with your child and then tell the class teacher next day.)



HOW TO HELP

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS STUCK

SAY *“Does the picture help? Look at the letters. How does it start?”*

OR *“Think about the story. What would make sense?”*

OR *“Read it again and think what would sound right there?”*

If the word is still not known.....

SAY *“Would make sense? Does it look like? Check it. Run your finger under it as you say it slowly.”*

WHEN YOUR CHILD MAKES A MISTAKE

When your child makes a mistake **WAIT** until the end of the sentence. This gives your child a chance to notice and fix the mistake.

If the mistake is not fixed.....

SAY *“It could be (tiger) but look at (the first letter).”*

OR *“You said..... Does that make sense?”*

OR *“You said.....Can we say it that way?”*

OR *“ You said.....Does that look right?”*

If the mistake is fixed.....

SAY *“I like the way you fixed that. Great reading work!”*

OR *“Well done! Now it makes sense!”*

OR *“Good! You reread it and got it to sound right”*

OR *“Terrific. You noticed it didn’t look right and fixed it.”*



1 To encourage one-to-one word matching:

SAY *“Read it with your finger”*

OR *“Point to each word.”*

OR *“Did that match?”*

OR *“Were there enough words?”*

OR *“Did you run out of words?”*

2 When one-to-one word matching is established, encourage your child to read with fluency and expression.

SAY *“You say it like (Father Bear) would say it.”*

OR *“Put the words all together so that it sounds like talking.”*

AND encourage your child to notice and use full-stops, questions marks, exclamation marks and speech marks.

Praise is a powerful way to provide your young reader with some feedback on performance. To be effective, it needs to be explicit and specific, and directly linked to the behaviour you are encouraging at the time.

Just saying: “*Good work!*” or “*Well done!*” will not give your child enough information on WHY it was ‘good’, or WHAT he or she has done well.

It is most helpful to begin your comment with:

‘I like the way you.....’

Starting with these words makes it more likely you will describe the behaviour.

Example:

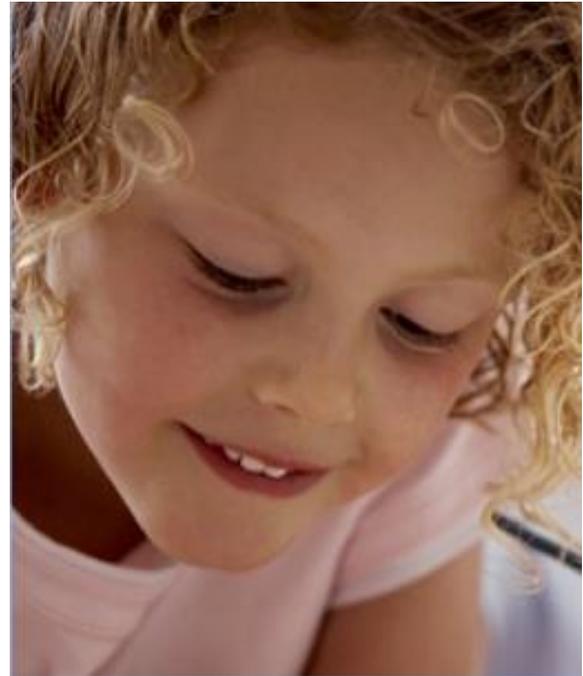
- *I like the way you put those words together, just like talking!*

Praise is best used to consolidate a new behaviour, rather than an old one.

Example:

When checking the picture to help solve a new word is a behaviour being encouraged, you would look for opportunities to praise the child for doing it.

Before long however, you will EXPECT the child to use this strategy, and your praise will be directed towards something different.



A word on finger-pointing

For the child who is just beginning to understand the need to match what he says with what he sees, a clear pointing finger can be most helpful. The movement of the finger will guide the movement of the eyes - a very important outcome.

HOWEVER.... if finger-pointing is allowed to persist it will get in the way of fluent reading. The reader will continue to attend ‘word-by-word’, rather than to meaningful ‘groups of words’. Comprehension and the ability to solve will become increasingly difficult.

SO....once the young reader demonstrates an understanding of one-to-one correspondence (*one word on the page = one word spoken*) it is important to begin to discourage pointing with the finger.

