



HEARING YOUR CHILD READ

1) CHOOSE A QUIET TIME

Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. 10 to 15 minutes is usually long enough.

2) MAKE READING ENJOYABLE

Make reading an enjoyable experience. Sit with your child. Try not to pressurise if he or she is reluctant. If your child loses interest then do something else.

3) MAINTAIN THE FLOW

If your child mispronounces a word do not interrupt immediately. Allow your child to self-correct. It is better to tell a child some unknown words to maintain the flow rather than insisting on trying to sound them all out. If your child does sound out some words, make sure they are using the letter sounds rather than alphabet names, as in ERR.

4) BE POSITIVE

If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Don't say "No. That's wrong." but "Let's read it together" and point to the words as you say them. Boost your child's confidence with constant praise for even the smallest achievement.

5) SUCCESS IS THE KEY

Until your child has built up his or her confidence, it is better to keep to easier books. Struggling with a book with many unknown words is pointless because the flow is lost, the text cannot be understood, and children can easily become reluctant readers.

6) VISIT THE LIBRARY

Encourage your child to use the public library regularly.

7) REGULAR PRACTICE

Try to read with your child every day. Little and often is best. Teachers have limited time to hear children read on an individual basis.

8) COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

Your child has a reading record book. Try to communicate regularly with positive comments and any concerns. Your child will then know that you are interested in their progress and that you value reading.

9) TALK ABOUT THE BOOKS

There is more to being a good reader than just being able to read the words accurately. Being able to understand what has been read is just as important. Always talk to your child about the book; about the pictures, the characters, how they think the story will end, their favourite part. You will then be able to see how well they have understood and you will help them to develop good comprehension skills.

10) VARIETY IS IMPORTANT

Remember that children need to experience a variety of reading materials eg. picture books, hardbacks, comics, magazines, poems, recipes, instructions and information books.

Reading sessions with your child

Getting Started

Talk about the book before you start to read.

- This looks interesting. What do you think it's going to be about?
- This story is called What do you think might happen in it?

Focus on the meaning

If your child comes across unfamiliar words, try to help them understand the meaning rather than 'saying' individual words.

- What would make sense here?
- Have a look at this bit again.
- Can you guess what this word might be?
- Miss that word out and read on – now can you guess what it might be?
- Go back to the beginning of the sentence and have another try.
- What sound does the word begin with – what word could it be?

Responding

Praise your child when they work out a word correctly. If they say "is it ...?" and the word is correct, reply

- Let's see if that makes sense. Yes – well done!
- Does that sound right? Yes – fantastic!
- You worked that word out really well. Brilliant!

When the attempt is wrong

- That's a good word and it would make sense but the writer has used the word instead.
- You tried really hard to work that word out. It says

If your child still can't attempt a word after prompting, read it yourself. Give positive feedback on other aspects of their reading as often as possible, but without interfering with the flow of the reading.

- Well done! You could tell that didn't make sense.
- That sounded so good. Fantastic!
- You are so clever. How did you know how to work that one out?

It is very important to respond to content. If there's a joke, laugh. If it's sad, say how moving you found it. If there is new information, discuss it, preferably giving your child a chance to share their own knowledge. Express an interest in what's going to happen next.

Coming to a close

All reading sessions needs to end on a positive note that acknowledges the effort your child has made.

- Thank you for reading with me.
- I really enjoyed that book. The bit I liked listening to best was
- You read that really well today. What was your favourite part?

Most importantly, don't let your child feel that they have disappointed or worried you in any way. All children learn at different rates. If you have any concerns about your child's reading, write them down in your child's reading record book, or talk to your child's teacher.