

Reading at Home

Parent Advice



How Can I Support My Child With Reading At Home?

Studies show that reading for pleasure makes a big difference to children's educational performance. The evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. With the help of parents, children can learn how to read and can practise reading until they can read for their own enjoyment. Then they will have a whole world of information and knowledge at their fingertips! Below you will find some tips and advice on how you can help to support your child with reading at home.

10 top tips for parents to support children to read from the DfE

1. Encourage your child to read

Reading helps your child's wellbeing, develops imagination and has educational benefits too. Just a few minutes a day can have a big impact on children of all ages.

2. Read aloud regularly

Try to read to your child every day. It's a special time to snuggle up and enjoy a story. Stories matter and children love re-reading them and poring over the pictures. Try adding funny voices to bring characters to life.

3. Encourage reading choice

Give children lots of opportunities to read different things in their own time - it doesn't just have to be books. There's fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics, magazines, recipes and much more. Try leaving interesting reading material in different places around the home and see who picks it up.

4. Read together

Choose a favourite time to read together as a family and enjoy it. This might be everyone reading the same book together, reading different things at the same time, or getting your children to read to each other. This time spent reading together can be relaxing for all.

5. Create a comfortable environment

Make a calm, comfortable place for your family to relax and read independently - or together.

6. Make use of your local library

Local libraries also offer brilliant online materials, including audiobooks and ebooks to borrow. See Libraries Connected for more digital library services and resources.

7. Talk about books

This is a great way to make connections, develop understanding and make reading even more enjoyable. Start by discussing the front cover and talking about what it reveals and suggests the book could be about. Then talk about what you've been reading and share ideas. You could discuss something that happened that surprised you, or something new that you found out. You could talk about how the book makes you feel and whether it reminds you of anything.

8. Bring reading to life

You could try cooking a recipe you've read together. Would you recommend it to a friend? Alternatively, play a game where you pretend to be the characters in a book, or discuss an interesting article you've read.

9. Make reading active

Play games that involve making connections between pictures, objects and words, such as reading about an object and finding similar things in your home. You could organise treasure hunts related to what you're reading. Try creating your child's very own book by using photos from your day and adding captions.

10. Engage your child in reading in a way that suits them

You know your child best and you'll know the best times for your child to read. If they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) then short, creative activities may be the way to get them most interested. If English is an additional language, encourage reading in a child's first language, as well as in English. What matters most is that they enjoy it.

What difference can I make as a parent/carer?

You can make a **huge** difference. Sharing a book with your child allows you to share adventures and experiences in the safe world of the book. It allows you to ask questions, talk about what has happened and decide what you think together.

Here are some more helpful hints for reading with your child:

- Bring the characters to life – talk about the characters, the drawings and the events so that the story starts to come alive
- Don't be afraid to try different voices or try out your acting skills. Your child will enjoy your performance and appreciate the story even more
- Remember that your face says it all – so exaggerate your normal expression times three like a children's TV presenter: children will love it
- Turn off the television and concentrate on enjoying the book
- Try audio books that children can listen to on the car stereo, on computers or phones – this is a great way to build a child's understanding of stories and improve their listening skills
- Make books part of your family life – always have books around so that you and your children are ready to read whenever there's a chance
- Bedtime stories – regularly read with your child or children at bedtime. It's a great way to end the day and to spend valuable time with your child