



Why Reading is Fun! Suggestions for Parents

We all know that reading is important but as parents you have a very important role to play. This sheet is designed to show you ways in which you can help your children enjoy learning to read and encourage them to read for themselves. We hope you will have some fun as well.

Here are some top tips to ensure your child enjoys their reading:

- Reading and sharing stories is the most important thing you can do to help your child succeed. Research evidence shows that your involvement in your child's reading and learning is more important than anything else in helping them to fulfil their potential.
- Try and make time regularly to read together. Bed time is good but try and find a special time when you will not get disturbed. Your child will feel important and learn to look forward to reading time. When you hold your child and give them this attention, they know you love them. It should also be a relaxing time for you.
- Reading to children encourages them to become readers. Listening to stories will help develop your child's attention span and will set their imaginations soaring.
- Books contain new words that will help build your child's language and understanding. Children who are familiar with books and stories before they start school are better prepared to cope with the demands of formal literacy training.
- Encourage lots of people to read to or with your child. By showing them that everyone thinks it is important, children appreciate their reading time and recognise that this is a fun thing to do. When you give them this gift, you will create memories that will last a lifetime.
- Don't worry if you are not confident about reading aloud. We are all shy at first but relax and don't worry if you make a mistake. Try using funny voices and you could even act out bits of the story to make it more interesting. After a while you won't care what you look like as long as everyone is having fun.
- Join your local library. It's free and you can borrow lots of books to try out at home. If your child has a favourite one then you could think about buying it but don't waste money on books they don't like.
- Children enjoy their favourite stories over and over again so patience is something you will need. Repetition is good but always introduce new stories as well to develop your child's reading skills and language.
- Get together with some other parents and share books and storytelling. Have storytelling parties or make sure you have a story before they go to bed for a sleepover. You could do scary stories for a Halloween party perhaps.

- Borrow some audio books for a change. Again, other voices add some interest and children can either listen or read the book at the same time. Famous actors like David Tennent and Stephen Fry are great storytellers.
- See if your school will let you come into their library to borrow books to take home. Let your child choose their own favourite stories.
- Enjoy reading yourself. There are some great books out there and if you are keen readers then your children will be too.
- Books can be useful for explaining new or difficult ideas to children. New babies, going to hospital, moving house and family issues can all be explained through stories and may make the process easier to handle.
- The illustrations in picture books are excellent and will help to give children a lifelong appreciation of beautiful art. Encourage your children to look at the illustrations and talk about them and the detail.
- Children's books today are so well written that they are fun even for adults.
- Even if your children read fluently, it is still important to continue reading with them. This will build up their reading stamina and make a regular reading time a habit as well as keeping the special time together you have created.
- Retaining this special time together will also allow you to discuss the books they are reading independently. Books can be a valuable vehicle for discussion about many issues and give them the opportunity to share any anxieties they may have.
- The important thing is for you to enjoy reading with your child. They will love telling you what they like and what they don't like. Just have fun!
- Be a good role model and let your children see YOU reading. It is important for children to see us reading for purpose and for pleasure. Male role models are very important. Research shows that when dads and other male carers get involved in their reading, both sons' and daughters' achievement is enhanced. If you have reluctant sons, seeing dads and other male family members enjoying their reading will help boys to realise that they too can enjoy reading.

Here are some websites that you might like to look at for ideas:

- www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/charlieandlola - the famous brother and sister first appeared in a book. Try this website as well as reading Lauren Child's great stories.
- www.lovereadng4kids.co.uk – is a website produced by an independent bookshop. It has lots of information on new books as well as favourite authors for you to look up.
- www.bookstart.co.uk – you should all have received some books from BookStart during your child's life but this site has some easy ideas on how to help with their reading.
- www.hants.gov.uk/library - lots of information from your local library. It has details for events and competitions as well as recommended reads.