

Reading Tips for Parents



Reading Tip 1: Choose a quiet time

Set aside a quiet time with no distractions.
Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough

Reading Tip 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.

Reading Tip 3: Maintain the flow

If your child mispronounces a word do not interrupt immediately. Instead allow opportunity for self-correction. It is better to tell a child some unknown words to maintain the flow rather than insisting on trying to build them all up from the sounds of the letters. If your child does try to 'sound out' words, encourage the use of letter sounds rather than 'alphabet names'.

Reading Tip 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.

Reading Tip 5: Success is the key

Parents anxious for a child to progress can mistakenly give a child a book that is too difficult. This can have the opposite effect to the one they are wanting. Remember 'Nothing succeeds like success'. 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. Flow is lost, text cannot be understood and children can easily become reluctant readers.

Reading Tip 6: Visit the Library

Encourage your child to use the public library regularly.

Reading Tip 7: Regular practice

Try to read with your child on most school days. 'Little and often' is best. Teachers have limited time to help your child with reading.

Reading Tip 8: Communicate

Your child will most likely have a reading diary from school. 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.

Reading Tip 9: Talk about the books

There is more to being a good reader than just being able to read the words accurately. Just as important is being able to understand what has been read. Always talk to your child about the book; about the pictures, the characters, how they think the story will end, their favourite part, etc.

You will then be able to see how well they have understood and you will help them to develop good comprehension skills.

Reading Tip 10: Variety is important

Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials eg. Picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, poems, and information books. Keep an eye out for the themes that catch your child's imagination at school - and help follow it up with more reading.

Reading Tip 11: Ask a range of questions

Experience based: Have you . . . ever lost a toy? ever felt sad like that? got a best friend?

Retrieval: What did the dog catch? How many children fell in the water? When did the mouse wake up? Where did the girl hide?

Inference (answers not directly in the text): Why do you think... the man hid? the character took a torch with him? Who do you think left the birthday present? What was the weather like on the beach?

These should be followed up with WHY/ HOW DO YOU KNOW?

Predictive: What do you think the story will be about? How do you think the character will escape? What do you think will happen next?

KEY question words:

HOW, WHEN, WHY, WHICH, WHERE, WHO

Try to use a range of questions THEN Praise and model.

That's a good idea. I think that...

Challenge some responses with: Why do you think that?

Reading Tip 12: Ideas: Reading Wheel

Get your child to choose an activity from the reading wheel

Create a new ending.

If you were the main character what would you do now?

What would it be like to be a character in this story?

Write a review of the book.

Describe how one character maybe feeling.

Is this story like another you have read?

Describe the main events.

Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why?

Describe a character.

Retell the story in your own words.

Write the diary of a character in the story.

Reading at home is the most important way that you can help your child. Make sure your child has regular reading practice and check they understand what they read.