

A guide to helping your child improve their reading and writing skills

Praise and encouragement underpin your child's confidence; please give it generously whilst supporting the following activities at home. Encourage your child's love of reading by widening the genre of books they have access to, use the local library, bookshops and consider books as a present or reward. Within this range include:
Poetry, fiction, non fiction, comics and books with chapters.

Set aside 15 mins a day where the TV/lpad/xbox is turned off and you both read perhaps the newspaper/magazine/book for you and their book of choice. Spend time reading to your child, modelling the use of intonation and expression. Enable your child to extend their vocabulary by guessing what a new word means, use the dictionary to check and then ask if they can suggest alternatives. They could use a thesaurus to discover alternatives and use them in their writing. In order to develop your child's writing skills ensure that they are writing for a purpose e.g. your shopping list, their birthday invitations, cards, thank you letters, postcards, Christmas lists, writing competitions in newspapers and magazines and letters to Santa.

They can also write to their teacher, perhaps sharing their ideas on the class topic. Give boys in particular an interesting theme e.g. a football match report, player profile or a book/film review.

Encourage your child to explore how and where they write the best, is it lying on the floor leaning on a hard book or is it sat at the kitchen table listening to classical music?

Some Reading strategies

1. Start by talking together about the book. What is it called? What do you think it is about? Have you read any others like this before? Did you like them?
2. When you have established where to start reading, discuss any pictures which help focus attention on some of the words which are likely to appear. Ask about any characters already introduced. Ask about the story so far and what they think might happen next.
3. If the child is reading with a fair degree of accuracy try to pick one area they can develop e.g. perhaps they are not stopping at full stops or are reading with very little emphasis. It is often an idea to read to them to show them what you mean.
4. If they are struggling, perhaps because they are tired or are getting used to a new type/style of reading books - read with them at the same time. This takes the pressure off them and makes it a successful, rather than a painful experience.

5. If they are finding individual words difficult you can sound out the first letter, then the first two, then they may be able to finish the word for you.
6. In situations where you have given a lot of help you could say; “Why don’t you read that to me again, all by yourself?” You can then measure how much they have managed to pick up.
7. Invite the child to read on if the word is unknown and then go back to the unknown word- the additional text may provide the essential clue needed to solve a particular mystery word!
8. If there is a particular word or a few words that the child is having difficulty remembering, or you sense the child needs a little break, do some studying: look at the word together-what is the overall shape of the word? Is it longer or shorter? Does it sound how it is spelt? Can you find any short, familiar words within the word e.g. “end” in friend”? Does it remind them of any words they know?
10. Above all, show your delight when they successfully manage to read a difficult word, complete a page or unravel the story.

These suggestions will help your child improve as they are fun, purposeful and most importantly provided by you!