

# Hearing Your Child Read

## 1. Choose a quiet time

Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough. If they really are not in the mood, do not push it. There is always time later on. It is essential that reading time is enjoyable not a time when people get frustrated or cross!

## 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 or try reading a book together.

## 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'. Also use the pictures to help or ask the children to read on to the end of the sentence. This can sometimes help.

## 4. Be positive

If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Don't say 'No. That's wrong,' but say, "What a good try!, '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

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.

## 6. Visit the Library

Encourage your child to use the public library regularly.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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. 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 children need to experience a variety of reading materials eg. picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, poems, and information books.

## 11. Sounding out and fast words

Remember, you cannot sound out all words. Some words you just have to know like said or the (fast words or sight words). If the child cannot read one of these words, tell them once and then if you see it again, say "You had it here, do you remember?" Do not make a fuss, just tell them! It is supposed to be fun.

## The Sounds of Letters

Tips for teaching your child the sounds:

- It is important for a child to learn lower case or small letters rather than capital letters at first. Most early books and games use lower case letters and your child will learn these first at school. Obviously you should use a capital letter when required, such as at the beginning of the child's name, eg. **Paul**
- When you talk about letters to your child, remember to use the letter sounds: **a buh cuh duh e** ... rather than the alphabet names of the letters: **ay bee see dee ee** . The reason for this is that sounding out words is practically impossible if you use the alphabet names. **eg. cat, would sound like: see ay tee** When saying the sounds of **b, d, g, j** and **w** you will notice the 'uh' sound which follows each, for example buh, duh... You cannot say the sound without it, however, try to emphasise the main letter sound
- Do not teach letters in alphabetical order. Avoid teaching letters of a similar shape such as b and d, or p and q together. Allow time and other letters to come in between such pairs of letters. **c, o, a, d** and **g** is a good order to start with because they are all formed in a similar way when you write them. Teach only one letter at a time and do not go on until your child is confident with the current one.