

TOP TIPS: SUPPORTING READING AT HOME

Sometimes it's difficult to know how to best support your child's reading at home, but there are lots of things you can do to help them on their reading journey!

• CHOOSING WHAT TO READ

It can be hard to know where to start when choosing a book for your child. Remember that as adults we like to re-read favourite books, relax with a magazine or tackle something challenging. Children are the same, so encouraging choices; maybe a familiar book for re-reading as well as something new. Don't show disapproval if your child returns to favourites.

Websites such as www.puffin.co.uk and <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/> offer advice on what books children of different ages might enjoy, and don't forget that you can always join your local library!

The Libraries NI App can be downloaded for free to your mobile phone or tablet, and it puts the library directly into your pocket. The app carries your membership barcode for easy access to scan and borrow books in person at the library, or you can use it to:

- Search Libraries NI's extensive catalogue of books and eBooks;
- Make requests for books and get them delivered to your library (there is a 50p charge);
- Renew your books with one touch;
- Scan the barcode of any book you see to check if they have it in stock;
- Make changes to requests wherever you are; control your account;
- Tap and download eBooks, audiobooks and eMagazines;



Don't worry if you don't have a variety of books to choose from at home, reading material comes in lots of different forms. Instructions, recipes, play scripts, song lyrics, road signs, comics, magazines, newspapers, song lyrics are all examples of other forms of reading material that can be shared.

When it comes to developing a love for reading, it doesn't matter what you read. The most important thing is that we all help to inspire our children to feel confident and comfortable reading.

- **HOW DO I KNOW IF A BOOK IS A SUITABLE LEVEL FOR MY CHILD?**

One way of checking if a text is suitable for your child is to do the 'Five Finger' Test. Choose a book to read with your child. Open it in the middle and read down the page. Have your child raise one finger for each word on the page that they cannot read.

- ✓ **No fingers or one finger:**
This book is easy for you to read. Have fun!
- ✓ **Two Fingers:**
This book is just right for you enjoy your reading!
- ✓ **Three fingers:**
This book is challenging but you may still enjoy it. Try it!
- ✓ **Four fingers:**
This book will be very challenging. Read with a partner and /or a dictionary handy.
- ✓ **Five-fingers:**
This book is probably too hard to be fun. Save it for another day or read it with an adult who can help with difficult words.



• WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S READING

There are lots of things you can do at home to help encourage and support your child during the reading process.

BEFORE READING BEGINS:

- ❖ Set aside a special time and place for reading; no phone, no TV, no making tea. Give your child your full attention.
- ❖ Sit side by side and keep it happy and relaxed.
- ❖ To keep them interested provide a wide range of reading materials.
- ❖ Books should look attractive and interesting.
- ❖ Make sure the book is not too difficult, as this will only cause the child to become frustrated. Use the 'Five Finger Test'.
- ❖ Talk about the type of book/ reading material: is it fact or fiction, story or non-fiction etc?
- ❖ Before you read, ask your child to look down the page, get them to point out if there are any words they might not know, refer to them as 'tricky words'. Then rehearse them by telling them what they are.

DURING READING:

- ❖ Read aloud together as this encourages reluctant readers. You can:
 - *Take it in turn to read- you read a page, they read a page;*
 - *Read aloud together and when the child gives a sign, stop reading and allow the child to continue on their own;*
 - *Read alternate sentences;*
 - *Read alternate pages.*
- ❖ You do not always have to read the whole book every night. Focus on two pages and talk about the characters, setting and plot in a lot of detail.

- ❖ Point out unfamiliar words and discuss vocabulary.
- ❖ When listening to your child read for pleasure, just provide the unknown word(s).
- ❖ If you are reading to support your child progress and i.e. not reading simply for pleasure, and they do not know a word use the strategy – **PAUSE, PROMPT, PRAISE** (PPP)

PAUSE

If (or when) your child comes to a word they don't know, try not to jump in straight away and supply the correct word. Wait and give your child time to work out the word. In the first instance 'pausing' creates an opportunity for your child to try and self-correct or work out the word for themselves.

PROMPT

If your child successfully supplies the word they have stumbled over, it's a good idea to suggest that they go back to the beginning of the sentence and re-read the whole sentence again (to recap meaning) before reading on.

If your child has not independently worked out the problem word, at this point you may intervene and prompt them with some quick, low-key suggestions about what they could do. Say things like:

- Try reading on for a sentence or two, miss out the difficult word and see if that helps you to work it out what it is.
- Look at the sound the word begins with, use that clue and think about what might make sense here. Look at the pictures and see if they give you a clue to what the word might be.
- Box the parts of the word with your fingers to break it into recognisable chunks, e.g. find a smaller word or the base in a word, find the 'th' in that, now find the 'at'.
- Go back to the beginning of the sentence, re-read it and have another go at working it out.
- If prompts like these are not working, this is the point at which you simply tell your child the correct word.
- After a short time 'prompting' say: ***Would you like me to help you? or How about I tell you the word?***

- You may even briefly explain the meaning of the word but then quickly prompt your child to continue reading. Try not to spend too much time prompting as your child will find it difficult to maintain the overall meaning of what they are reading. In other words let them read the book.

PRAISE

This is the easiest part of the process for any parent because it's something that comes naturally. Praise your child's reading efforts and successes whenever you think it is appropriate during the reading process.

As well as praising their effort it is often good to tell them why and not dwell on the mistakes. For example you might say:

"Well done, I thought it was very clever the way that you went back, re-read the sentence from the beginning and worked out that word you were having trouble with."

"That was great reading tonight, I know I had to tell you a few words but you also worked out some pretty tricky ones for yourself. Well done."

- ❖ Encourage your child to sound out unfamiliar words using their phonics; this applies to older children as well.
- ❖ Write the words they do not know on a sticky pad and look at them later, breaking them down into syllables or looking for 'tricky' bits in them
- ❖ Tap out the syllables in longer words.
- ❖ Remind them that every syllable contains a vowel sound,
e.g. **hos pit al / gen er ous**
- ❖ Praise all good attempts at working out words
- ❖ Vocabulary* is important. Use a dictionary to find meanings.

**Try to use ambitious vocabulary yourself in day-to-day life so that your child will experience a wider range of words and will be less daunted when coming across new words.*

- ❖ Discuss punctuation on the page, for example, exclamation marks. Ask what are these for? What should you do when you see an exclamation mark?
- ❖ Intermittently, talk about what is happening in the story, in the pictures, in the text.
- ❖ To help with prediction you can read the text and leave a gap that the child has to fill with a word that makes sense.
- ❖ When you are reading, tell your child that you are having difficulty with a word and cannot read it. Ask them 'what can you do to work out a word you don't know? The reply you want is;
 - *Say the first sound*
 - *Try to sound across the word*
 - *Look at the picture (if applicable)*
 - *Chunk the syllables*
 - *Read on*
 - *Think, does this make sense?*
- ❖ If they become tired or frustrated finish the reading yourself. Do not leave a book unread or a chapter unfinished. Use a pleasant tone and good intonation when reading

AFTER READING:

- ❖ Ask if they enjoyed the book. Why?
- ❖ Make predictions. What do you think will happen next?
- ❖ If your child is keen, create little tasks relating to the text. (e.g. draw what you think a character /setting may look like, write a few sentences about what happens next.
- ❖ Play 'find the word' when the reading is over. Call out a word and get the child to find the word in the text.
- ❖ If your child is interested in a book but is struggling, read it to them or let them listen to it on CD/audio app

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ❖ Be prepared for your child to be unresponsive sometimes. Reading can be challenging.
- ❖ Be patient. Avoid unhelpful negative comments and non-verbal body language.
- ❖ If your school would prefer you not to read further on than the designated reading pages, ask for supplementary material to read for pleasure. The more practice they get the better
- ❖ Encourage the use of reading everywhere: Comics, magazines, catalogues, birthday cards, car/bike manuals, e-bay, TV guide, sports pages, map reading, road signs, what is on at the cinema, timetables, shop signs and menus.
- ❖ Carefully consider when buying books as presents, as you would like an appropriate interest level and readability. (Remember the five-finger test)

• QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK WHEN READING

DISCUSS THE BOOK BEFORE YOU READ IT	DISCUSS THE BOOK AFTER YOU HAVE READ IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I wonder what it is about?</i> ○ <i>Who do you think is in it?</i> ○ <i>Who wrote this book?</i> ○ <i>Who drew the pictures?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Could you see pictures in your head when we read it?</i> ○ <i>What do you think of that story?</i> ○ <i>I wonder what will happen next....</i> ○ <i>I don't like this character, what did you think?</i>

STORY STRUCTURE QUESTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Where and when does the story take place?</i> ○ <i>What clues in the story helped you decide this?</i> ○ <i>What happens at the beginning at the story?</i> ○ <i>Is this book fiction or non-fiction?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What is the genre of this story?</i> ○ <i>Who is telling the story?</i> ○ <i>How does the story end?</i> ○ <i>How can you tell?</i>

AUTHOR'S PURPOSE QUESTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Do you think the title is a good one for the story? Why do you think that?</i> ○ <i>What language did the author use to help you visualise _____?</i> ○ <i>Why do you think the author wrote this story?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>How is this story like other stories the author has written?</i> ○ <i>Is the language used formal or informal? How can you tell?</i> ○ <i>How did the author use persuasive language?</i>

MAKING CONNECTIONS QUESTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What other story does this remind you of?</i> ○ <i>How are you alike or different from the main character in the story?</i> ○ <i>How does this story make you feel?</i> ○ <i>When have you felt like that before?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What lessons did you learn in the story that can help you in your life? Explain.</i> ○ <i>What other books have you read with similar characters or themes?</i> ○ <i>Do you think that helped you to understand the story better? How?</i>

INFERENCE QUESTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is the message or lesson of this story?○ Why do you think the character acted like he/she did?○ What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What can you figure out that the author didn't put into words?○ Maybe it was how someone was feeling or what they might have been thinking.