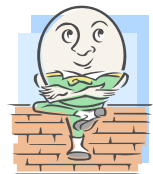




ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD TO READ

1. Lead by example. Children love to mimic the actions of adults, so if they see you reading they will be encouraged to try it for themselves, and will see reading as something that grown-ups do as well as children.
2. Make time to read. Evenings, especially bedtimes are the perfect time to settle down with a book. It is time to be together and relax, enjoying stories before settling down to sleep. This is not, however, a good time for them to be reading to you as they will probably be too tired.
3. Turn the TV off. It's important to try and ensure there aren't too many distractions when reading with your child. If it's quiet and peaceful, then it's easier to talk about the book and concentrate on it.
4. Keep books around your home. If a child is as likely to see books as they are any other household item, then they will grow up expecting books to be in the home. Books become a natural part of home life.
5. Don't think that you can't tell a story well. Everyone can tell a story. In fact we spend much of our lives telling and re-telling stories without even thinking about it. You can talk about picture books, and you don't have to read every word exactly as it's written to get the ideas of the story across to your child. You could also make up stories of your own.
6. Point to the pictures in a book and talk to your child about them long before your child can speak. They will love listening to the sound of your voice. Their language skills will grow and develop, even if they can't have a conversation with you yet! You can do the same with the words too: it's never too early to let children know that print has meaning.
7. Keep some books in toy boxes. Paper books are likely to get damaged easily but there are lots of cardboard books around, as well as cloth and plastic ones which will withstand rougher handling.
8. If your child is reluctant to read, don't force them. Reading is a pleasurable activity, so if it's seen as a punishment or a chore, children will be unlikely to grow into adult, or even teenage readers. If your child has had enough, then stop.
9. Songs and nursery rhymes are brilliant ways of telling stories with no need for an actual book. Get a tape of nursery rhymes to play at home or in the car and sing along!
10. Playing simple games, such as who can spot the most post boxes on a journey, or eye spy, or finding something beginning with the letter 'P' when you are at the supermarket, are all enjoyable ways of improving your child's language skills.



11. Remember that there are lots of things to read all around the house, and outside. Older children often enjoy reading magazines and papers. Younger children can find lots of examples of words around the house, from helping you read a recipe book to the writing on the side of a favourite cereal box.
12. Be positive! When we are learning anything new, we are bound to make mistakes so help your child by letting them know that it's alright to make mistakes - and don't keep correcting every one, or they will feel like giving up. Concentrate on the pleasures of reading a book, rather than the pitfalls of it.
13. Remember that reading, like all aspects of your child's development is personal to them. Children develop at different speeds with whatever they are learning to do. If you are anxious or demand too much of your child, then they are likely to see themselves as failing and letting you down so try to be patient.
14. As well as reading the books your child has received from school, visit your local bookshop to see what they have in stock. You don't have to buy a book every time you go into a bookshop, and it's good to see what children's fiction and non-fiction has to offer.



15. Use the library. It's free! There are staff around to give you advice, and you can pick up a book for yourself too! Most libraries also have reference sections, as well as dvds, tapes, CD's and magazines.
16. Books make great birthday and Christmas presents - it doesn't always have to be toys and games. Try to find out what books are going to be eagerly received by your child by talking to them about the books you come across in the bookshop or the library.
17. Look out for storytelling sessions at your local library or bookshop. This is a great way for you both to enjoy a story and to talk about it afterwards - it's free and it's fun.
18. Don't stop reading. Just because your child can read now doesn't mean to say that there is no value in talking about good books and sharing time to read. It never stops being an amazing way to share time and explore new worlds.
20. Don't worry if your son or daughter wants to read by themselves. Reading can be a very intimate and personal time which we don't always want to share, especially as we become adult readers. Respect this, but remember - once you are hooked into the reading habit, you just can't stop asking for more!

