2014

Literacy Information for Parents

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Parents are influential in teaching children to read. You are the first educator of your child and as such form a vital link in the education of your child.

Here are some positive tips to help make reading at home enjoyable for both you and your child.

- Find a quiet time where you are both free from distraction. Ten minutes or so is enough time.
- Maintain a smooth flow to the reading. You don’t need to jump in at every error. Give your child time to work on a suitable strategy. Give the word if necessary to keep the meaning and fluency alive.
- If your child mispronounces a word, allow some time for self-correction using strategies like sounding out, re-reading or reading on before going back to tackle the word again. If sounding out, try to encourage the letter sounds, not names and blend sounds together e.g. l-like
- Ensure your child knows that it is OK to make a mistake and use it as an opportunity to learn something new. Try a prompt like “Let’s read it together.”
- Easy books are a good source of confidence building especially with reluctant readers. Your child can then concentrate on other reading skills like expression, reading to character voices and tone of voice.
- Try to read with and to your child each day. Reading to your child will give a positive role model to your child as well as give a model of what reading should sound like. Do not accept word by word reading. Fluency at all levels of reading will help with comprehension and enjoyment.
The purpose of reading is to either inform or entertain. If your child’s reading sounds broken say “Let’s put that together so that it sounds like we are talking.”

- Communicate with your child’s teacher regarding any concerns you may have.
- Variety is important. Allow your child to try a range of different reading experiences.
- Children with speech or language problems sometimes have trouble sharing their problem so you do need to be mindful of providing a good model in speaking and listening to your child. Talking does count! Repetition will help and reading familiar books can help build confidence as can books that rhyme.
- Discussing a story of information after reading can also help with comprehension as well as promoting good talking and listening skills.
- If your child has ADD or ADHD long sessions at the end of the day can be a challenge. So make it as fun as you possibly can. Reading does need to be done sat home. It may be driving and looking for a street address, or reading a map, a TV guide or instructions for constructing Lego. Praise, praise, praise.
- For children with ASD making eye contact can be difficult so try reading for short periods of time, pointing to the pictures or text as you go. Try to keep to a familiar routine each day.
- Read the same story. Repetition will help with the discovery of language.
Prompts you may find useful:

If stuck on a word...

- Try that again
- Great you stopped...what is tricky about that word?
- You try
- Is there part of that word you know?
- Let’s read that part together

Remember books or computer screens will have different layouts so some navigation may be required such as...

- left to right, top to bottom
- sometimes writing may be in columns or under illustrations
- Information may be contained in bullet points or subheadings.

No matter what level of book your child is reading the aim is the same. To read fluently, with expression and using the punctuation provided. Writers use punctuation to add meaning and expression to their work and tell us that way in which they want their book read.

Older readers sometimes read to themselves more than to someone else, so they need to understand that there are times when they will need to read or speak to an audience and that this will require different skills than reading to themselves. They should be reminded about pausing at commas, and full stops. Question marks and exclamation marks should also be highlighted using voice tone or volume.
Writing:

- Encourage the correct formation of print to enable a smooth transition to running writing in Primary. Check with your child’s teacher on letter beginning and end point.
- Give opportunities to strengthen finger muscles through using play dough, cutting, writing in sand and picking up small items like bobby pins. This helps to hold a pencil with greater control for writing.
- Try to increase your child’s vocabulary with a new word each day and use it in a sentence!
- Keen readers make keen writers.
- When faced with an unknown word ask your child to stretch out the word, say it slowly and write down the sounds they hear in the order they hear it. This helps with spelling any word at any stage of learning.

By Janice Taylor