

# Parents & Children Reading

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Parents teach their children to talk quite naturally. Parents can also help their children learn to read just as naturally. Research shows that parents who hear their children read for a few minutes each day have children who are more successful readers. Some children prefer to read silently and then discuss their reading. This can be an even better thing to do. Research also shows that parents who read to their children produce more interested readers with wider vocabularies. **We would like to suggest that you READ to your children and either HEAR them read or DISCUSS their reading with them most days. Ideally at least 5 times a week.**

### *👉* WHAT WILL YOU READ TO THEM?

- 🌟 Stories YOU enjoy
- 🌟 Books your children like
- 🌟 Stories and rhymes children already know and love
- 🌟 Fiction and non-fiction
- 🌟 Newspaper and magazine articles
- 🌟 Anything at all

### *👉* WHAT ELSE CAN THEY READ?

- 🌟 The breakfast cereal packet
- 🌟 The telephone directory
- 🌟 Shop signs, advertisements
- 🌟 Comics, newspaper
- 🌟 The TV program guide

### *👉* HOW LONG SHOULD WE SPEND:

🌟 **READING TO OUR CHILDREN?** As long as you and the child enjoy it. It's best to stop while you are still enjoying it, then the next occasion is something to look forward to.

🌟 **LISTENING TO OUR CHILDREN?** Five or ten minutes or longer if you're enjoying it. If your child prefers to read silently and then talk about the book with you, you'll need to have some idea of the contents. So take a few minutes to skim through the book and you'll have a better discussion.

### *👉* SOME SUGGESTED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- 🌟 Did you like the book as much as the last one you read? Why? Why not?
- 🌟 I was surprised by..... What did you think?
- 🌟 I was expecting something different to happen. What about you?
- 🌟 Would you have done what that character did?
- 🌟 Do you think that character did the right thing / the wisest thing?
- 🌟 What would you have done in the circumstances?
- 🌟 What do you think is going to happen next?
- 🌟 How did this story make you feel?
- 🌟 How about writing another story for these characters?

### *👉* IF THE BOOKS ARE TOO DIFFICULT.....

Sometimes children will choose or bring home books that are too difficult for them to read. They may have chosen the book because they like the look of it or the subject interests them. In this case you can:

- 🌟 Read the book to them
- 🌟 Read the book together
- 🌟 Say "I'll read a bit, you read a bit"
- 🌟 Echo read – you read a sentence then the child copies (not for very long though!)

### *👉* WHAT WILL THEY READ TO YOU?

- 🌟 Books they want to read
- 🌟 Old favourites (builds confidence and fluency)
- 🌟 Parts of non-fiction books on subjects that interest them
- 🌟 The newspaper or TV guide
- 🌟 Books from home
- 🌟 Books from school
- 🌟 Books from the library

- 🌟 Recipe books
- 🌟 How to do it books
- 🌟 Junk mail
- 🌟 Birthday cards

### *℘* **WHAT IS “TOO DIFFICULT”**

‘Difficulty’ depends on children’s interests. Children will struggle through very difficult books if they are interested. On the other hand, they might appear to have difficulty with a simple book that lacks interest for them. Sometimes the **five finger test** can be a useful guide. Tell your child to put a finger down on the table every time s/he comes to an unknown word. If they have put five fingers down before the end of a page, it’s too difficult for independent reading. If they still want to read it, help them through the text in one of the suggested ways.

### *℘* **WHAT CAN CHILDREN DO IF THEY ARE STUCK ON A WORD?**

There are five quicker ways of getting to an unknown word than sounding it out.

1. Leave it out and go on then think what the word might be.
2. Say ‘mmm’ in its place and go on then think what the word might be.
3. Start again at the beginning of the sentence and take a running jump at it.
4. Look at the first letter and guess what it might be.
5. Have someone tell you the word.

\*\*\*\**Finally sound it out, only when the word is phonetically regular.*

### *℘* **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF THEY READ A WRONG WORD?**

If they read a word incorrectly but it still makes sense, let them go on. So if a child reads “home” instead of “house”, that’s fine. They still have the meaning and “home” happens to be a word that fits more naturally into their own language. If the child reads “horse” instead of “house” then they are not understanding the meaning and they are simply saying the words. Then ask, “*Did that make sense? What does that mean?*”, You could read the sentence to them as they read it and ask, “*Would that be right? What **could** it be?*” **The purpose of reading is not to say words but get meaning.**

### *℘* **PAUSE, PROMPT, PRAISE**

When reading, if your child: \* Reads the wrong word; \* Adds or deletes words or \* Stops altogether, then

**Pause** for 5 seconds. This gives your child time to do something to solve the problem.

**Prompt** by giving clues to help solve the problem.

**Praise** when the problem is solved partly or wholly.

### *℘* **BUT MY CHILD IS AN EXCELLENT READER!**

Even when children are successful readers they still are children and still enjoy having stories read to them. You can read books to your child that are as yet too difficult for them to read (encyclopaedias, some non-fiction, difficult or long stories may be in this category). By doing this, you will be developing new interests, giving them a taste for new authors, increasing their vocabulary, widening their experience with language and expanding their horizons. Children who can read very well can learn to read a **greater range** of books: mystery, adventure, science fiction, fantasy, biography, travel. They can also learn to do things with their reading: cook something, learn a craft or do an experiment. They might even write their own books, write a letter to the author telling what they thought about the book, or keep a diary of their impressions, a sort of reading log.

### *℘* **IT HELPS IF YOU ARE A READER TOO!**

Let your child see you read (model silent reading for them) and let your child realise that it’s important to you. That demonstration is more important than what you read. Let them know when you are going to look something up in a book. Let them know you are looking forward to sitting down with your book when you are free.

Visit a library; borrow books. Take your children with you.

*℘* **Reading should be fun!** For **reluctant readers**, show where reading is linked to life skills (eg TV guide, Play Station /computer game). Reading does not always have to be a book as many different text types are used in our daily activities.