

Help my child at home with reading

Practical ideas

St Mary's Church of England Primary School



Practical ideas to help your child at home with reading

Helping with reading

As a parent you are probably helping your child with reading much more than you may realise. If your home contains books, magazines and catalogues and your child sees you reading, if you read to your child and talk together about familiar stories and if you also use printed materials to find out things, then your child already has a head start in this area.

How to help with reading at home

- Concentrate on enjoyment and grasping the meaning rather than absolute accuracy.
- Keep reading time relaxed, comfortable and pleasurable, in a quiet corner, with the television turned off. Set aside a special time each day when you can give your full attention to reading with your child and where you can be close to your child.
- Talk about the cover and read the title before rushing your child into the text, asking questions, such as: what do you think it will be about; what sort of book is it; have you read one like this before?
- Look through the book taking time to notice interesting pictures and words. Be prepared to go back some pages if your child wants to. Then read the opening together.
- Don't worry if your child brings home a book that has been read before. Why not ask for a summary before reading it again, then discuss the book at a deeper level than last time.
- As your child progresses, talk about authors, characters and plots or what new information has been learnt.

What should I do if my child gets stuck on a word when reading a book?

If your child mispronounces a word try not to interrupt immediately. Instead allow opportunity for self-correction.

If they can't read the word encourage your child to have a go before you tell them what the word says.

Here are some strategies that we use at St Mary's to help:

First try getting your child to blend the *phonemes* together (see Glossary for explanation of terms). Try to say 'smooth the sounds together' or 'run the sounds together,' rather than 'sound out the word' as this can result in isolated units of sound. For example, reading the word 'thing' - **th**- i-ng rather than T-H-I-N-G.

Remind your child to say the sounds softly, as this again helps with blending e.g. c-a-t not cer-arh-ter

Other strategies to help your child to decode words:

- Encourage your child to use the context and the picture to help identify unknown words. What word would make sense here? What is the first sound or phoneme of that word?
- When your child is able to read some words but struggles with longer words try asking them to break down the words into syllables e.g. en-joy-able. Or with compound words

like sandcastle they could cover up part of the word. They can also look for words within words e.g. teacher - teacher.

If your child doesn't get the word after a couple of prompts, tell them the word straight away. You want to avoid feelings of failure, plus make sure they get on with the book while they can still remember what the story is about!

The Oxford Reading Tree Scheme is a separate home reading scheme from the one we use in school. While in Reception we will help your child to select a new book each week, please feel free to change your book more often and let us know when you feel your child is ready to move on to the next stage. The teacher or teaching assistant will then read with your child and move them on accordingly. Your child should be able to read the majority of the words in a book, with some new words to challenge them before they move on to a more difficult book. If your child is struggling, take over the reading yourself and let your class teacher know or put a note in the planner.

We also now have a link between our Guided Reading 'Bug Club' Scheme and home. You can read books online that have been selected by your child's teacher at <https://www.activelearnprimary.co.uk/login>, as well as also accessing lots of fun activities. Your child will be given a username and password in their planner. Please ask your teacher for more details.

What activities could I do at home to help support my child's reading?

Reading a book with your child everyday is the best way that you can help with your child's reading. Here are a few other activities that will also help:

1. Activities to help with the sound stage -learning to hear sounds in words.

- I spy "I am thinking of something that starts with 't'." Next try listening for the end sounds, as the middle sound of a word is the hardest to hear.
- Say a sound and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sound. They don't have to write them down - they could write them in the air or on your back.
- Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sound (for example, the 'd' sound for the letter *d*).
- Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out the letters. Have them say the sounds that match the letters.

2. Activities to help blending letters to make words and beginning to read stage (but often requires help!):

- A good idea is to say a word and tap out the sounds. Begin with simple three letter words such as *cat* or *hot*. Three taps means three sounds. Say each sound as you tap. Take care with digraphs (see glossary). The word *fish*, for instance, has four letters but only three sounds, *f-i-sh*.

- Use magnetic letters to make a word e.g. play. Now say the individual phonemes in a word and then blend them together to make the word.
- Rhyming lotto and poems help tune the ears to the sounds in words.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters 'p-e-n' spell *pen*, how do you spell *hen*?).

3. Activities to help at the 'fluent reader stage'- beginning to read independently:

- Reading out loud improves comprehension and expression.
- Read hard books out loud, alternate reading every other paragraph. Easy books are fun and help with fluency. Just right books build vocabulary and independence.
- Reading books with audio CDs builds vocabulary, reading fun and expression.
- Have your child explain what's happening in the story or get them to write questions about what is happening to increase comprehension.
- Covering parts of multi-syllable words with your finger helps your child to sound them out.
- Draw your child's attention to the use of punctuation in the text. For example, model the effect of an exclamation mark or a question mark on how you read a sentence.
- Pick some words in each chapter to look up in the dictionary.

Really useful websites:

Letters and Sounds:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>

(Excellent Games/ resources Reception - Try looking at Phases 2-5)

BBC website: Word and Pictures

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/cvc/index.shtml

www.ictgames.com/literacy.html

(reading machine/ phoneme pop/ three letter house)

www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/

(Series of free games to practise the first stages of reading)

Activities to help learn the Tricky words:

Some words in English have an irregular spelling and cannot be read by blending, such as *said*, *was* and *one*. Unfortunately, many of these are common words. The irregular parts have to be remembered. These are called the 'tricky words'. Your child will bring these words home as part of their spellings.

There are several ways of learning tricky words:

- Look, Cover, Write and Check. Look at the word to see which bit is tricky. Ask your child to try writing the word in the air saying the letters. Cover the word over and see if the child can write it correctly. Check to make sure.
- Say it as it sounds. Say the word so each sound is heard. For instance, the word *was* is said as 'wass', to rhyme with *mass*, the word *Monday* is said as 'Mon-day'.
- Mnemonics. The initial letter of each word in a saying gives the correct spelling of a word. For instance, *laugh* - Laugh At Ugly Goat's Hair.
- Learn a chant - Difficulty - Mrs d, Mrs i, Mrs f f i, Mrs c, Mrs u, Mrs l, t, y

- When children confidently recognise symbols as letters, using joined-up writing can improve spelling of tricky words.

Activities to help develop your child's comprehension skills

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.

- Help your child develop comprehension skills by discussing a story together before you read it: look at the cover - make a prediction about what might happen in the book, and then after you have read it talk about whether or not the prediction came true.
- After you have read a story, ask questions about the story or a short paragraph to the child to see if they have understood. 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.

General Tips to promote reading and make it fun:

- Reading aloud to your child is the best way to get him/her interested in reading.
- Re-read your child's favourite stories as many times as your child wants to hear them, and choose books and authors that your child enjoys.
- Read stories that have repetitive parts and encourage your child to join in.
- Read all kinds of material - stories, poems, information books, magazine and newspaper articles, and comics.
- Read with drama and excitement! Use different voices for different characters in the story. Use your child's name instead of a character's name. Make puppets and use them to act out a story.
- Point to words as you read them. This will help your child make a connection between the words he or she hears you say and the words on the page.
- Take your child to the library and look at interactive CD-ROMs and the Internet, as well as books.
- Keep reading to your child even after he or she has learned to read. By reading stories that will interest your child but that are above his or her reading level, you can stretch your child's understanding and keep alive the magic of shared reading.

As a parent, you are your child's most important role model. If your child sees you reading, especially for pleasure or information, he or she will understand that reading is a worthwhile activity.

Glossary of Terms:

CVC words: Words that consist of a consonant-vowel-consonant as in c-a-t and b-i-g

Digraphs and trigraphs: A digraph is a two letter **grapheme** where two letters represent one sound as 'sh' in *ship*. A trigraph is a three letter grapheme where three letters represent one phoneme as 'igh' in *night*.

Grapheme: A written symbol of a phoneme, that is, a letter or group of letters representing a sound.

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound in a word/speech.

Phonics: Consists of the knowledge of the skills of segmenting and blending, knowledge of the alphabetic code and an understanding of the principles underpinning the way the code is used in reading and spelling.

Segmenting and blending: Segmenting and blending are reversible phonic skills. Segmenting consists of breaking words down into their constituent parts to spell. Blending consists of building words from their constituent phonemes to read.

Split digraphs: A split digraph has a letter that splits, i.e. comes between, the two letters in the digraph as in *make*, where 'k' splits the digraph 'ae' which represents the phoneme /ai/.

Jolly phonics actions to help

The Actions	
s	Weave hand in an <i>s</i> shape, like a snake, and say <i>ssssss</i>
a	Wiggle fingers above elbow as if ants crawling on you and say <i>a, a, a</i> .
t	Turn head from side to side as if watching tennis and say <i>t, t, t</i> .
i	Pretend to be a mouse by wriggling fingers at end of nose and squeak <i>i, i, i</i> .
p	Pretend to puff out candles and say <i>p, p, p</i> .
n	Make a noise, as if you are a plane - hold arms out and say <i>nnnnnn</i> .
c k	Raise hands and snap fingers as if playing castanets and say <i>ck, ck, ck</i> .
e	Pretend to tap an egg on the side of a pan and crack it into the pan, saying <i>eh, eh, eh</i> .
h	Hold hand in front of mouth panting as if you are out of breath and say <i>h, h, h</i> .
r	Pretend to be a puppy holding a piece of rag, shaking head from side to side, and say <i>rrrrrr</i> .
m	Rub tummy as if seeing tasty food and say <i>mmmmm</i> .
d	Beat hands up and down as if playing a drum and say <i>d, d, d</i> .
g	Spiral hand down, as if water going down the drain, and say <i>g, g, g</i> .
o	Pretend to turn light switch on and off and say <i>o, o; o, o</i>
u	Pretend to be putting up an umbrella and say <i>u, u, u</i> .
l	Pretend to lick a lollipop and say <i>l l l l l</i> .
f	Let hands gently come together as if toy fish deflating, and say <i>f f f f f</i> .
b	Pretend to hit a ball with a bat and say <i>b, b, b</i> .
ai	Cup hand over ear and say <i>ai, ai, ai</i> .
j	Pretend to wobble on a plate and say <i>j, j, j</i> .
oa	Bring hand over mouth as if you have done something wrong and say <i>oh!</i>
ie	Stand to attention and salute, saying <i>ie ie</i> .
ee or	Put hands on head as if ears on a donkey and say <i>eeyore, eeyore</i> .
z	Put arms out at sides and pretend to be a bee, saying <i>zzzzzz</i> .
w	Blow on to open hand, as if you are the wind, and say <i>wh, wh, wh</i> .
ng	Imagine you are a weightlifter, and pretend to lift a heavy weight above your head, saying <i>ng...</i>
v	Pretend to be holding the steering wheel of a van and say <i>vvvvv</i> .
oo oo	Move head back and forth as if it is the cuckoo in a cuckoo clock, saying <i>u, oo; u, oo</i> . (Little and long oo.)
y	Pretend to be eating a yogurt and say <i>y, y, y</i> .
x	Pretend to take an x-ray of someone with an x-ray gun and say <i>ks, ks, ks</i> .
ch	Move arms at sides as if you are a train and say <i>ch, ch, ch</i> .
sh	Place index finger over lips and say <i>shshsh</i> .
th th	Pretend to be naughty clowns and stick out tongue a little for the <i>th</i> , and further for the <i>th</i> sound (<i>this</i> and <i>thumb</i>).
qu	Make a duck's beak with your hands and say <i>qu, qu, qu</i> .
ou	Pretend your finger is a needle and prick thumb saying <i>ou, ou, ou</i> .
oi	Cup hands around mouth and shout to another boat saying <i>oi! ship ahoy!</i>
ue	Point to people around you and say <i>you, you, you</i> .
er	Roll hands over each other like a mixer and say <i>ererer</i> .
ar	Open mouth wide and say <i>ah</i> . (UK English)

Complex Speed Sounds chart

Consonants: stretchy

f	l	m	n	r	s	v	z	sh	th	ng
ff	ll	mm	nn	rr	ss	ve	zz	ti		nk
ph	le	mb	kn	wr	se		s	ci		
					c		se			
					ce					

Consonants: bouncy

b	c	d	g	h	j	p	qu	t	w	x	y	ch
bb	k	dd	gg		g	pp		tt	wh			tch
	ck				ge							
	ch				dge							

Vowels

a	e	i	o	u	ay	ee	igh	ow
	ea				ā-e	y	ī-e	ō-e
					ai	ea	ie	oa
						e	i	o
							y	

oo	oo	ar	or	air	ir	ou	oy	ire	ear	ure
ū-e			oor	are	ur	ow	oi			
ue			ore		er					
ew			aw							
			au							