

Reading at home

A guide for parents to support children's at home reading



How can I encourage reading at home?

Talk with your child

Listening and speaking provides your child with different ways to learn and think about the world.

Be a positive reading role model

Chat about what you are reading in books, magazines, or viewing on screen.

Read to your child everyday

Read books (or parts of them) to your child. Point out words on objects around the home, read something aloud from a magazine or book, or point out something interesting on screen.

Listen to your child read

All children like to receive positive feedback and listening to your child read is a great opportunity to congratulate them on what has been achieved. Children need to see themselves as readers.

Encourage your child to read widely

There is much to learn from reading picture books, short stories, poetry, comics, magazines, instruction manuals and many other written sources.

Reading successfully at home

Getting started

- Let your child choose the place for reading. Successful reading can happen on the floor, out the back, and in the cubby house!
- Encourage your child to hold the book so he or she becomes familiar with handling it (turning the pages and so on). In the case of an e-book that is displayed on a tablet device or computer, give your child time to become familiar with how to navigate through the e-book and interact with it.

Before reading

Introducing a book is necessary for children of all ages. As adults, we do our own introductions when we're selecting what to read. We read the blurb, look at the number of pages, the size of the font, the author's name (familiar and comfortable, or new and intriguing), and glance at the photos, illustrations, diagrams and so on. Children need to be introduced to this process as well. It's much easier to read a book if you already know something about it.

If your child has already read the book, then your discussion about it may be short. You may just like to ask your child what you can expect to hear him or her to be reading about.

A new book may need a longer conversation. You can do this in a range of ways:

- Talk about the title, author, pictures and blurb (you may like to read the book dedication and wonder who the person/people might be and why it was dedicated to them). Who would your child dedicate a book to?
- If your child has read another book about the same topic or by the same author, discuss what seems to be the same or different about this book.
- Discuss how to pronounce the names of characters and places in the book.
- Ask your child to predict what the book might be about, using the information from your earlier conversation.
- If the book you are reading is from a reading program, perhaps supplied by your child's school, check the inside front or back cover, as there may be some further tips included that you can use.



During reading

The goal for at home reading is for the reader to feel they are reading successfully – this will motivate and encourage them to keep reading. Some tips to help your child:

- Ask your child to read the book aloud at their own pace
- For beginner readers, notice if your child is turning the pages from front to back and reading from left to right on the page. If not, help them with these concepts
- Encourage your child to apply their phonics (sounds) skills to break down, or sound out, words that they are finding difficult to read

What should I do if my child cannot work out a word?

When listening to your child read, it's tempting to correct the mistakes he or she makes. While this may seem helpful, being interrupted can cause your child to lose his or her place or to become distracted. You need to give your child time to work out an unfamiliar word or, if the attempt is unsuccessful, for you to share strategies that can be used.

If your child pauses while reading, wait for five seconds to allow time for them to work out the word. Then try and give a helpful prompt, for example:

- Try slowly sounding it out.
- Look at the first letter. Look at the last letter. Look at the letters in between. What do you think the word might be?
- Look for a part of the word that you know.
- Try breaking the word into syllables.
- If the word was...what letter would it start with? What letter does this word start with?

If your child hasn't worked out the word after two prompts, name the word. Then ask your child to say the word again, start the sentence from the beginning and continue reading.

To learn to read is to light
a fire; every syllable that
is spelled out is a spark.

– **Victor Hugo**

After reading

When the book has been finished (or your child has had enough), always talk about what was read so you can be sure he or she understood what the author was saying. You could use the following prompts to have a discussion about the book:

- What do you think the main message of the book was?
- Who was your favourite character? Tell me why?
- There was lots of information in the book, what did you find most interesting?

How can I get my child to read more at home?

Find books about his or her interests because these will be appealing. Remember, too, that while your child may be reluctant to read regular books, he or she may read many other types of texts, for example, magazines, e-books and webpages. This is still 'reading' and should be encouraged.

Think about what you read for work, leisure and in your everyday life. Use these to broaden your child's reading experiences and provide opportunities to read, talk, enjoy and learn.

- websites
- text messages
- emails
- apps
- newspapers
- magazines
- advertisements
- signs
- recipes
- ingredients on food packages
- menus
- instructions for games.



Discussion questions for reading at home

Here are some questions to help you get started to talk, enjoy and learn more about the different types of stories your children are reading.

Encourage children to write their answers below and then talk about them together. Use the questions on this page for fiction stories, and the questions on the next page for non-fiction.

1. Where does the story take place?

2. Who are the main characters in the story?

3. Who is your favourite character? Why?

4. What is the main idea of this story?



Use the questions below for talking about non-fiction stories. Your children can write their responses in these spaces.

1. What is the big idea in this book?

2. Find some words in the book that the author has used to explain the big idea, write them down.

3. Choose one of the words that you write down in question 2, and write a definition of it in your own words.

4. What information did you find most interesting in the book?



Trust Oxford to build literacy learning.

At Oxford, we believe that the more children read, the better their educational outcomes. This paper has been created as a resource for teachers to share with parents, guardians and caregivers to support children's reading at home.

To learn more about Oxford's literacy resources visit **oup.com.au/literacy**

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