



A guide for parents to teaching early reading skills.

Why is it important for my child to read?

The ability to read is vital. It paves the way to success in school, which can build self-confidence and motivate your child to set high expectations for life.

People read for many reasons:

- For pleasure and interest
- For work
- To obtain information that will help them to make choices and decisions
- To understand directions (such as street signs and recipe books)
- To learn about the world
- To keep in touch with family and friends.

How will my child learn to read?

Learning to read does not happen all at once. It involves a series of stages that lead, over time, to independent reading and fluency. The best time for children to start learning to read is when they are very young, usually at pre-school level. Sharing books with young children is so important. Once in our Foundation Stage then they will start to learn Jolly Phonics and Action words.

Action words are the first words that the children learn to read. Many of these words children are unable to word build by sounds alone. What we are trying to do is to encourage children to look at the whole word and remember it. Each word is accompanied by a corresponding action, modelled by the teacher.

The Reading Journey

As your child develops as a reader they will progress through a number of stages:

1. The pre-reader and the beginning reader:-

- Likes to look at books and likes to be read to.
- Likes to behave like a reader - for example, holds books and pretends to read them.
- Learns about words by looking at picture books and then books with words.
- Learns about words from songs, rhymes and print around them.
- Learns how text works - fuses picture and memory to tell or re-tell a story for example where a story starts and finishes.

2. The emerging reader :-

- Is ready to receive instructions about reading.
- Learns that text is a common way to tell a story or to convey information.
- Begins to match written words to spoken words and to perceive relationships between sounds and letters.
- Begins to experiment with reading and is willing to say words out loud when reading simple texts.
- Finds the pictures helpful in understanding the text, and learns that the words convey a message consistent with the pictures.

3. The early reader:-

- Develops more confidence and uses a variety of methods, such as relying on visual cues, to identify words in texts.
- Adopts his or her reading to different kinds of texts.
- Recognises many words, knows a lot about reading and is will to try new texts.

4. The fluent reader:-

- Thinks of reading as a good thing and does it automatically.

- Uses a variety of methods to identify words and their meanings
- Can read various texts and predict events in a story.
- Relates the meaning of books to his or her own experience and knowledge, and understands what is new.

PHONICS

We teach phonics throughout school to help children with their reading.

What is phonics?

Words are made up of small units of sound called phonemes. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes (sounds) that make up each word.

This helps children to read words and to spell words. In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:-

GPC - This stands for Grapheme Phoneme correspondence. This simply means that they are taught all the phonemes in the English Language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order.

The first sounds taught are s,a,t,p,i,n

Blending - this is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. The skill is vital in learning to read.

Segmenting - this is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

How can I help my child?

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher.

When you help your child learn to read, you are opening the door to a world of books and learning.

Reading aloud to children is the best way to get them interested in reading. Before long they will grow to love stories and books.

Eventually they will want to read on their own.

With the help of parents, children can learn to read and can practice reading until they can read for their own enjoyment. Then they will have a whole world of information and knowledge at their fingertips! Reading can be a family activity. Spending time with word games, stories and books will help your child to:

- gather information and learn about the world:
- learn how stories and books work - they have beginnings, endings, characters and themes
- build a rich vocabulary by reading and talking about new words
- learn how to listen and how to think
- learn the sounds of language and language patterns
- fall in love with books

Children learn to read at different rates. However it is important to choose the right books, at the right level to support your child and help them to improve.

What tips can I use to help my child learn to read?

1. Talk to your child.

Oral language is the foundation for reading. Listening and speaking are a child's first introduction to language. Talking and singing teach your child the sounds of language, making it easier for him or her to read.

Here are some things that you could do to help your child build an appreciation for words and language:

- tell family stories about yourself, other relatives or friends.
- talk about the things that your child is doing.
- ask your child lots of questions.
- encourage your child to tell you what they are thinking or feeling.
- ask your child to tell you about their day and the activities.
- Be patient! Give your child time to find the words they can use.
- Sing songs, such as alphabet song, recite rhymes etc encouraging them to join in.

- Play rhyming games

2. Make reading fun.

Reading aloud can be a lot of fun, not just for parents but all family members. Here are some ways to get the most out of reading to your young child:

- Read with drama and excitement! Use different voices for different characters in the story.
- 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.
- Point to words as you read them. This will help your child to make a connection between the words he or she hears you say and the words on the page.
- Read all kinds of material - poems, information books, magazines, comics.

The more you enjoy the reading experience the more the child will enjoy it too.

3. Read every day

Children love routine and reading is something that you and your child can look forward to every day. By taking the time to read with your child, you show them that reading is important and fun to do.

- Start reading with your child when they are still very young.
- Set aside a special time each day when you can give your full attention to reading with your child.
- Choose a comfortable spot to read, where you can be close to your child.
- Choose a variety of books.
- Vary the length of reading time according to your child's age and interests.
- Read slowly so that your child can form a mental picture of what is happening in the story

- Praise your child for their ideas and participation.
- When you and your child are away from home, take along books or magazines for your child to read and listen to.
- Keep reading to your child, even after they have learned to read themselves.
- By reading stories that will interest them but are above their reading level, you can stretch your child's understanding and keep alive the magic of shared reading.

4. Talk about books

Talking about books that you have read is just as important as reading them. Discussing a story or book with your child helps them to understand it and connect it to their own experience. It also helps to enrich their vocabulary.

Here are some ways to help your child acquire skills in comprehension, reasoning and critical thinking:

- Ask your child about the kinds of books that they are interested in reading.
- Talk to your child about your favourite books from childhood.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and to comment on the story and pictures in a book - before, during and after.
- Look at the cover and the title of a book with your child and ask what they think might happen in the story
- Encourage your child to think critically about the story.
- Think out loud about the story as you read, and encourage your child to do the same. For example, ask Does this make sense? Why? Or why not?
- Give your child time to think about the story and then ask them again about it in a few days time.

5. Set an example

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

share many daily reading activities with your child. Here are some ideas:

- Read recipes, food labels, instructions and brochures
- Read traffic signs and signs in stores and restaurants
- Look up information in cookbooks, phone books, atlases and dictionaries
- Read greeting cards, letters and e-mail messages to and from friends and relatives.

6. Listen to your child read

As your child learns to read, listen to them read aloud. Reading to you gives your child chance to practice and improve their reading skills. As you listen to your child, remember that your reactions are important. Above all, listen without interrupting. Be enthusiastic and praise your child as often as you can.

- Show your child that you are enjoying the story by indicating interest and asking questions.
- Give your child time to figure out tricky words.
- Try to have your child read aloud to you at times when there will be no interruptions.
- Make sure that your child selects books that aren't too difficult.
- Don't worry if the books your child chooses are a little easier than the ones they read at school.
- Take turns reading with your child, especially if they are just beginning to read, or try to read together.
- Talk about the story after you have read it, to make sure that they understand it.
- Don't forget to encourage your child to read on their own!

Where can I get help ?

Your child's teacher can provide advice about helping your child learn to read. Your child's teacher can suggest a variety of strategies that your child can and should use to learn how to read and especially to get through difficult passage. For example, your child's teacher may

suggest some or all of the following strategies for your child to try, if they get stuck on a word:

- Think about what word would make sense in the story or sentence.
- Sound the word out.
- Look for parts of the word that are familiar.
- Think about what word would sound right in the sentence.
- Check the pictures and the punctuation marks for clues.
- Go back and read again.
- Ask for help with the word.

Please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff at school should you have any concerns, worries or questions about your child's reading. We are here to help and support you!