

## Frequently Asked Questions

### When should I start reading with my child?

It's never too early to start reading to your child or singing rhymes, songs, jingles. Babies and toddlers enjoy looking at picture books and hearing stories read aloud. They love the rhythms and patterns of familiar stories and rhymes as well as the pleasure of snuggling up to parents/grandparents. They also like to stop and chat about the pictures and characters and so learn that reading is an enjoyable experience. Children are fascinated by the print that surrounds them e.g. labels, packaging road names, signs, television programmes and advertisements. Encourage this interest and read this kind of print with your child.

### What if my child wants me to read the same stories again and again?

It may be tiring for you but the value of hearing and re-reading is immeasurable. It is through these repeated familiar readings that children learn about the patterns and sounds of language and how stories work.

### What sort of books should I read?

Share any books that you feel happy to read e.g. nursery rhymes, picture books, fairy stories, folk tales, poetry, information books and comics. Children enjoy familiar stories and through re-reading learn the patterns of written language. Authors that capture interest through using rhythm, repetition and language patterns include J & A Ahlberg, Rod Campbell, S & J Berenstain, Julia Donaldson, Sarah Hayes, Maurice Sendak, Dr. Seuss, Martin Waddell.

### What if my child does not want to read?

You know your child better than anyone else. First of all, don't get upset. Instead suggest that he/she chooses something else to read and always offer to read *to* your child. Talk to your child's teacher.

### When shall I ask my child to take part in reading?

Most children have a favourite story. When reading a story that is familiar to your child, begin to leave gaps and you will find that he/she will join in with repeated phrases e.g. run, run as fast as you can; fee, fi, fo, fum. This is the beginning of reading, although your child is "reading" from memory. Once a child is familiar with the story, they can then begin to recognise the words in print. At this stage children may choose to take the book and "tell" the story in their own words.

### What about the alphabet?

Encourage your child to learn letter names and letters sounds. Children need easy familiarity with letters to recognise their shape and talk about them by name. Alphabet friezes, plastic letters help children learn the names of letters. Games such as I-Spy or silly sentences and rhyming games and songs help children hear letter sounds or word patterns.

### What if my child makes a mistake?

If the "mistake" makes sense e.g. "he ran into his home" for "he ran into his house", let him/her continue reading. The mistakes that matter are the ones that do not make sense e.g. "he ran into his horse". It would be helpful to re-read the preceding couple of sentences including the error, discuss whether it makes sense and tell the child the correct word. The most important thing in reading is for the meaning to be clear.

### **What do I do if my child doesn't know a word?**

In the beginning stages, just say the word, to preserve the meaning, or quietly say the first sound and see if your child can predict what the word is; do not ask your child to sound out an unknown word as this generally doesn't work, particularly with the common little words such as said, her, was. If in doubt always tell your child the word.

### **Should I cover up the pictures?**

No, illustrations often give clues to what is happening in a story. Encourage your child to look closely at the pictures, so that they are helped in their predictions.

### **How often should my child read to me?**

Encourage your child to read to you a few times each week at a time that is suitable for you both. Your child may also like to read to a younger brother or sister, or grandparents.

### **How can I help when my child wants to read silently?**

If your child prefers to read silently, particularly as they read longer stories, just chat about their view of the story or author's/illustrator's style. Continue to show that you are interested in their choice but respect their growing independence as readers. It is important however, to continue to read aloud to your child whatever the stage of reading development.

### **When should I stop reading to my child?**

Never! At every stage of development, it is important to read to or with your child. Continue to read to your child even when they become confident, independent readers.

### **Points to consider:**

Children will enjoy more success with reading if;

- they are encouraged to choose what they want to read. This choice may be influenced by a hobby they are interested in or a film they have recently seen;
- they are provided with a wide range of genres i.e. types of reading material e.g. fiction, nonfiction, plays, poetry;
- they are not put under pressure and made to feel that reading is a competition with their peers;
- they are given time to read in a relaxed environment;
- they are encouraged to talk about their reading, including their concerns.

**REMEMBER - PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE**