



How to Help Your Child Read

This handout is designed to give you a basic understanding of how reading is taught and enable you to support your child with their continued learning at home.

Early Learning Goal (to be achieved by the end of the Reception Year)

- Children read and understand simple sentences.
- Children use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately.
- Children also read some common irregular words.
- Children demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

There are three main aspects to learning to read:

1. **Phonic knowledge** - Knowledge of the sounds each letter makes and remembering the sounds two or more letters make when they are together, e.g. 'ch', 'sh', 'ee', 'igh'.
2. **Word recognition** - Instant recognition of words which may not follow conventional phonic rules, e.g. 'are', 'come', 'want', etc. when children are able to memorise these tricky words their reading will become more fluent.
3. **Comprehension** - understanding what has been read. It would make no sense for a child to spend 10 minutes decoding a text if they had no understanding of what they had read.



The reading books your child brings home from school will be specially selected to match your child's level of ability as well as provide your child with opportunities to practice skills they have been taught in class. You should receive a comment from the class teacher, teaching assistant or adult volunteer who has heard your child read which explains how your child is progressing. We have our own reading scheme at St John's Meads which enables children to access different genres of books from different publishers. More information will be given at the new parent reading meeting.



Developmental stages of reading

Your child may not achieve these skills in the order in which they are written here. This is normal because all children are different and learn these skills when they are ready. As a parent, you can help your child by noting which skills your child is good at and encourage them to try those which they have not yet achieved.

- Child enjoys listening to stories. They memorise their favourite stories and join in with repeated phrases
- Child "plays" at reading, holding the book the right way up, making up a story that relates to the pictures, running finger along the text from left to right

- Child recognises a few words, e.g. their name, mum, dad, siblings names, words common to their environment, e.g. street signs, shop names, etc.
- Child talks about stories, e.g. favourite part, characters they like/dislike
- Child can point to each individual word in a sentence as they say the words (1:1 correspondence)
- Child recognises some letter sounds and attempts to use this knowledge to decode words
- Child recognises some common words.
- Child recognises the use of punctuation in the text, e.g. full stops to indicate when to take a breath.
- Child recognizes an increasing number of phonics e.g. 'ch', 'oi', 'ay', etc. and uses these to build words
- Child discusses what they have read in terms of preferences, characters, plot development, etc.
- Child uses expression throughout their reading, taking note of punctuation and plot development



Reading Strategies

Walk Through - Before you begin reading a book, ask your child to look at all the pictures and predict what they think will happen in the story. This strategy is great to boost confidence and allow children time to focus on the plot without worrying about decoding.

Build the word - A very popular strategy but not always the most useful. If the word follows conventional phonic patterns then suggest your child breaks the word into each sound they can see. You may have to remind them of two letters which make one sound. If you notice the word does not follow conventional phonics suggest they try a different strategy.

Look at the picture - It is easy to get carried away with the words but please remind your child to look for clues in the pictures. This is very important and it's not cheating!

Read the book several times - The more times your child reads the same book the more likely they are to memorise some of the words. Most books also have fine details in the illustrations which they may notice when they read the book for the third or fourth time.

Share the text - This strategy is great when some independence is developing and prepares them for group reading in school. The best way is for you to read a page while your child points to the words with his/her finger and then listen as you child reads the next page. Continue sharing the reading until the book is complete.

Miss out a tricky word - If your child is stuck on a word in the middle of a sentence suggest that they miss out that word and continue reading the sentence. When they reach the full stop go back to the beginning of the sentence and try again.

Tell them a tricky word - If your child is struggling to decode a word don't wait for them to get frustrated and lose the thread of the story. Tell them the word but make a mental note of which words they found tricky and go back to it after the book is finished. If you notice it's the same word each time it would be worth while playing snap or bingo games with the word to help your child remember it!

Have fun - Most importantly reading should be enjoyable for you and for your child. Try to devote a set time several times a week, or everyday if possible, which is free from distractions for you and your child to read.

Read to your child - Once your child becomes proficient at reading it's easy to think that they don't need to hear stories anymore. This is wrong because children learn best by example. Please remember to read to your child, however many reading skills they have, at least once a week or more often.



Reading Jargon Buster

- Common word - a word that is used a lot to make the story and sentences make sense.
- Decode - working out what a word says using a variety of strategies.
- Group Reading - a small group of children (about 4 - 6) each have a copy of the same book and, with the teacher's support, they take it in turns to read a page, help each other and discuss the text.
- Guided Reading - a small group of children (about 4 - 6) each have a copy of the same book and read independently up to a designated point then discuss the plot and issues within the book. The teacher hears individual children read out loud during the independent reading time
- Phonics - the sound a letter or two or three letters together make in a word.
- 1:1 correspondence - child points to each individual word, even if the child has memorised the phrase.

We hope you can join us for the new parent reading meeting in the Autumn term.

