



Supporting Children's Reading at Home

Frequently Asked Questions

How long should I expect my child to read for?

Generally we would hope for a child to read for between ten and twenty minutes depending on how interested and eager they are. During this time you may also be looking at pictures together, talking about the characters and, for older children reading chapter books recapping what has gone on so far in the story. Younger children and emerging readers might spend time playing games to practise individual key words or phonic sounds.

My child isn't really reading yet. What should I do with the book?

Your child may be bringing home a book with very few words. Often the same words may be repeated from page to page. Spend time looking at the pictures and talking about what you can see. Make up the story from the pictures. Ask your child why certain things may be going on and what might happen next. Look at characters' faces and chat about how they are feeling and why. Look at the sounds in the words. Encourage your child to practice their growing phonic knowledge. You may find yourself telling them a word on the first few pages. Can they find it on the next page and read it on their own? With frequent practise, you will be amazed at how quickly they begin to recognise the sounds and put them together so that they begin to read.

What do I do if my child is reluctant to read at home?

We are all generally reluctant to do things we find hard and saying we don't like it can be a way of avoiding the challenge. In the first instance speak to your child's class teacher. They will be able to advice on different strategies to engage your child or provide alternative reading resources or activities. Try to do these activities every day. At this stage little and often is the key! In the meantime try to maintain the home reading routine by setting aside time to read to your child. This way they are still enjoying the regularly sharing a book together. We want them to fall in love with books and reading.

Why does my child keep bringing the same book home?

There are a number of possible answers. In most case from Year 1 upwards the books taken home are chosen by the children and can be swapped any day. Sometimes a teacher might have specifically said to the child that they should take the book home and practise it again before choosing a new book. It is good for a child to reread a text as often with the first read they are decoding so many of the words that it is difficult to make sense of the passage as a whole. A second reading will allow better understanding so that they can begin to use expression and take note of punctuation. So do encourage rereading of a book. On the other hand, your child might be choosing not to swap the book because they are particularly enjoying this story, and feel safe and confident reading it. Encourage them to have a go with a new book. If you put a note in the home school diary the teacher will allow your child to keep this book and try a new one at the same time.

What do I write in the home school diary?

Please initial the calendar every time you hear your child read. It is helpful if you can also add a comment about which pages your child read and how well they managed the text or any conversations you might have had about what they read. The home school diary is not checked every day in school so please don't write anything that you need the teacher to see immediately.

My child can read but says they don't like reading.

It is important to get the balance right between insisting that home learning is done and not putting a child off forever. It helps if we can understand why they are not enjoying reading. Sometimes letting the child choose what they want to read is the key. If possible, take them to the library and let them choose books they like the look of. Sometimes children are drawn to non-fiction and don't enjoy reading fiction books. The class teacher will also be able to offer advice about alternative genres or authors which may capture your child's interest.

My child is at after school club every day, how do I fit in reading at home?

Even just 10 minutes each day can make a difference. For younger children sharing a book together is a wonderful way to settle a child before bedtime. Consider alternating each evening between reading to your child and hearing them read to you. It is good practise for older children to begin to establish regular home learning routines. Choose a set time within the evening routine where you can sit together and read for just 10 minutes. Some families find that there is time in the morning before leaving for school to sit and read together for ten minutes. Perhaps you could set aside a longer period of time on a Sunday afternoon to listen to their reading.

My child wants to read things other than their school book. Does this count?

Yes, all reading should be celebrated. Children should be encouraged to read anything – adverts, junk mail, children's magazines and comics and books you may have at home. However, the school books have been carefully colour banded to support progression in reading skill and vocabulary. The home school diary should be used primarily to record reading of school texts and then other material.

My child says this book is too easy. Why do they have to read it?

A child reading at the correct instructional level should be reading with 90-95% accuracy. This means no more than 1 word in 10 posing a challenge. In addition they should be sufficiently fluent and confident with the text to be able to note punctuation and read with expression and good pace. Reading must involve pleasure; it is not a race. Moving too quickly through the book bands can result in a child being able to read every word with no comprehension of the passage. This becomes a problem later on.

My child prefers to read silently, must they read aloud?

Being able to read silently and enjoy the text is a wonderful milestone in a child's reading progress. It opens up *real reading for pleasure*. We don't want to discourage this and it is completely appropriate for older and more confident readers in to silently read to themselves. However, unless a child reads aloud, we have no way of assessing their fluency, expression and accuracy as it is possible to skim over a text and still comprehend the general gist. For this reason we ask that even children who are competent and confident readers read aloud to an adult on at least 2 occasions during the week. When a child has read silently, it is still helpful to ask them to tell you about what they have read before you initial their reading calendar. On these occasions the child must write a sentence or two in their home school diary describing what they have read.