

Encouraging your children to read

Reading is fundamental to the development of children and countless research shows the links between good reading skills from an early age and future success in life. However, finding books children want to read or authors that excite them can be difficult.

- Ensure your child sees you reading regularly whether it's a book, newspaper or magazine as it will instil a love of reading

Reading advice for parents of older children

- Encourage independent reading, but remember children will still love being read to.
- Older children who can 'read' still need encouragement at home to enjoy reading. Show an interest in the books they bring home.
- Encourage your child to try different authors and types of books.
- If they don't like the book they are reading, encourage them to change it. We don't read a book as an adult that we aren't interested in. Making an informed choice is an important part of reading for pleasure
- Encourage your child to read to younger brothers and sisters to make them feel like the 'expert.'
- Encourage your child to keep a record of the books they have read, perhaps giving each book a star rating.
- Don't worry if your child reads newspapers, magazines, comics and the internet. This will support their reading alongside reading books.
- Try to support your child with comprehending what they are reading. Ask questions which will deepen their understanding of a text.

Discussion prompts when reading with your child

Prior to reading

- Have you read any other books by the author? Tell me about them.
- Does the cover and the title give you any clues about the type of story this might be?
- Can you look at the pictures and predict what you think will happen in this book? What makes you think that?
- What characters do you think might be in our story?

During reading

- What do you think will happen next?
- What can you tell me about the story so far?
- Can you predict how the story will end?
- Why do you think the character did _____?
- What would you have done if you were the character?
- How would you have felt if you were the character? (use different characters)
- Can you put what you've just read in your own words?

Questions to delve a bit deeper

- Do any of the characters change during the story? Do any of the characters learn a lesson?
- How do you know how the characters feel in this story? Does the author tell you or do you have to work it out?
- Do you think there are any important messages in this book?
- What made you want to keep reading this book?
- Did this book remind you of any other books you have read or films that you have seen?
- Did it remind you of something that has happened to you or someone else?
- Did anything surprise you in this book?

Questions to round off the discussion

- Were your prediction about the story correct?
- Did you like the way the story ended? Why/why not?
- What was your favourite part of the book?
- Are there parts of this story that stick in your memory? What do you think made them stick?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why/why not?
- Would you like to read any other books by this author now?
- Did you learn anything new from reading and discussing this book?

Don't forget to talk about the vocabulary in the book. Pick out any unusual words or phrases and ask them what they mean. Can they think of another similar word?