

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.

Tips for nurturing a younger child's interest in reading:

- Reading should be a shared experience with your child in order to encourage a love of books from an early age.
- Children often learn stories off by heart so that they appear to 'read' a book. This is normal and an important part of your child becoming a reader. It shows they understand the connection between the words in print and the story.
- Children also often want to read the same book over and over again. This shows that they are enjoying the book and are getting real pleasure from reading.
- Let your child help you choose the books you read together. If they don't like the book don't force them to read 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.
- It's not just about books. Point out all the words around you: labels on food, street signs etc. Leave messages on the fridge to be read. Encourage your child to write shopping lists and to read them when you are shopping.
- Don't forget the traditional nursery rhymes. Children soon learn them by heart and love to 'pretend' to read them in a book.
- If they have a favourite book or author let them read them again and again but also introduce other authors gradually who write in a similar style
- Make reading fun and try to encourage your child to try different authors

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?