



A Parent's Guide to Supporting Children's Reading at Home

Reading is a valuable skill that benefits your child's wellbeing, imagination, and education. Even a few minutes of reading each day can make a significant difference for children of all ages.

Here are some top tips to help your primary-aged child read at home:



1. Encourage Reading and Make it Enjoyable

Simply **encourage your child to read**. Remember what matters most is that they enjoy reading and they see it as a purposeful activity.

Give children **lots of opportunities to read different things** in their own time. This doesn't just have to be books; it can include fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics, magazines, and recipes. Try leaving interesting reading material around the house to see what they pick up.

Show them that reading isn't just about their school reading book. Reading has purpose and it's vital that you show them what this might look like. "I want to read something funny..." or even "Can you read me something that is funny as I'm feeling a bit down?"

Engage your child in reading in a way that suits them. If they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), short, creative activities may be best. If English is an additional language, encourage reading in their first language as well as English.

2. Read Aloud Regularly

Try to **read to your child every day**. This is a special time to enjoy a story together. It's tempting to stop reading together when they can read for themselves, but they need you to do this. It's time together but also a great time for them to see a reading role-model. If you aren't comfortable reading to your child, sit and listen to an audiobook together. Even better, buy the book too and follow the text as you listen to it being read.

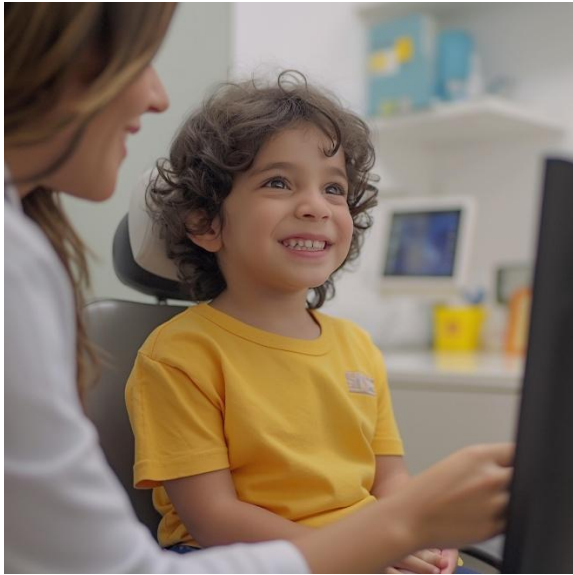
Stories matter, and children often love re-reading them and looking at the pictures. Therefore, don't feel that picture books are just for young children. They can suit a range of ages and it's important to note that reading doesn't have to be difficult. If your child wants an easier read and picks up a picture book, then let them. You'll be surprised by how much great vocabulary is in a picture book too.

Basically, read with your child for as long as they will let you.

3. Make Reading a Shared Activity

Read together as a family. Choose a favourite time to do this and enjoy it.

This could involve everyone reading the same book, reading different things at the same time, or your children reading to each other. Reading together can be relaxing for everyone.



4. Foster a Comfortable Reading Environment

Create a **calm, comfortable place** for your family to relax and read independently or together. Aim to limit the potential distractions so also think about the best time in the day when this can happen.

5. Explore Different Reading Materials

Encourage reading choice by providing a variety of materials.

This includes their **reading scheme books**, and more importantly, material they want to read.

Follow your child's interests and **look up information online** together. They will be

practising reading and developing retrieval and research skills without necessarily noticing.

Remember that **non-fiction** (like joke books and fact books) is just as valuable for learning to read as fiction, helping to improve vocabulary and knowledge.

Graphic novels and comics are great for developing imagination and understanding how pictures and text work together.

Encourage your child to tackle **longer fiction stories** to develop imagination, empathy, reading stamina, and vocabulary but don't force this upon them. It is ideal if they get to this point but rushing to it could stop it from happening.

6. Utilise Your Local Library



Visit your local library when you can to explore a wide range of reading ideas. Libraries also offer excellent **online materials**, such as audiobooks and eBooks that can be borrowed. When my children are unsure about the type of book they want to read, we head to the library so they can see what is available. I then guide them to certain areas of the library that they might want to explore.

7. Talk About Books

Don't feel there is a rush to read the words.

Discuss the front cover of a book and what it suggests the book might be about. Have a chat about this and even what the author might want us to think.

Talk about what you have been reading and **share ideas**. If you don't read, then let your child know why and what you are going to do about it.

Discuss surprising events or new things you have learned from reading to help them understand what reading can do and its potential purposes.

Talk about how the book makes you feel and if it reminds you of anything. Connecting emotions and feeling to books could really help some children explore what they are feeling inside. Let the author do the hard work.

We know that talking about books helps make connections, develop understanding, and make reading more enjoyable so let's spend plenty of time talking.

8. Make Reading Interactive and Fun

Tips:

Try **cooking a recipe** you have read together and discuss if you would recommend it.

Play games where you **pretend to be characters** from a book or discuss an interesting article.

Play games that involve **connecting pictures, objects, and words**, like reading about an object and finding similar things at home.

Organise **treasure hunts** related to what you are reading.

Try **creating your child's own book** using photos and adding captions. These are great to capture memories.

Listening to **audiobooks** can practise comprehension skills and might encourage your child to read more independently. It also helps develop imagination, teaches new vocabulary, and allows them to experience books above their reading level.

Use resources like **activity books** which can help practise sounds, letters, and early reading skills. **Phonics activity books** can provide a fun way to build phonics knowledge and reading confidence. **Reading and activity kits** can help develop reading, writing, and comprehension skills. **Phonics story games flashcards** are a fun way to practise reading and storytelling skills while focusing on phonic sounds and letters.

Remember that learning to read takes lots of practice, and the time you spend reading with your child is valuable. Support what they are learning at school by reading with them at home.

Teaching reading in school is tricky but if they get it right, your child will know they can read and will choose to do it. To increase the chance of this happening, use these tips and be a partner in the journey.

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