

Helping your Child to Read

These guidelines are to help you when you are hearing your child read. The most important thing is that reading should be a positive, enjoyable experience for both of you. **It is very important that children read everyday.**

Beginning the session

- Ask the child about the book to begin discussion, e.g. What is the book's title? What do you think the book will be about? Do you think you will like it?
- If the child has already started the book, ask about where they have got to and about the main events of the story so far.

Reading with your child

Try to find an appropriate time and relaxing space in order to encourage reading for pleasure.

- Encourage the child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and to try to blend the letters. In **Reception and Year 1** the books are fully decodable so children should be able to use their phonics to 'sound out' all the words. If they are struggling to blend the words together you can do this for them initially and then repeat the phonemes they are saying to 'sound out' the words for them and allow them to blend them together.
- For **year 2 up** if this 'phonic' approach doesn't work, encourage them to use the context/meaning of the text to help (e.g. by reading to the end of the sentence).
- If the book contains pictures, encourage the child to look at them to get clues about unfamiliar words.
- If the child hesitates, wait. Given time, they will often show that they can work out words successfully.
- Provide the word if none of the above strategies works or if the child is getting anxious.
- Don't correct every mistake the child makes; as they read on they will often self-correct when they realise that something does not make sense.
- Ask questions to check that the child understands the text, both vocabulary and context.
- For the more fluent reader, encourage expression and point out aspects of punctuation, e.g. speech marks, question/exclamation marks or different voices for the characters.
- Finish the session positively with a note of praise and encouragement!

Children need to read a book more than once to get a good understanding of what they have read. They may be able to read the words easily by the second or third time but they need to do this to support their understanding.

Please record that the child has been listened to by writing your initials in the Home/School Reading Record and by making a positive comment (see below). These are also the kind of comments that teachers will make when they listen to your child read.

Commenting on reading: Accuracy, Fluency and Expression

Please ensure that comments always accentuate the positive.

Accuracy – children need to begin by reading a book accurately. Most children should have a book that they can read with at least 95% accuracy. They can be involved in their own self-assessment of this, sometimes known as the Five Finger Test. Ask the child to hold up

(or lay down on the table) one finger for every word that they have difficulty reading or which they do not understand. Once they have used up all five fingers on one page of the book (or for each passage of 100 words), then they should consider changing the book to one where they can experience more success.

Too many pauses, hesitations and struggles will mean that the child is not really able to follow the story. A typical comment might be: "Sarah read her book accurately" or "Sarah's reading was mostly accurate today but she just needed just a little bit of help."

Fluency – many children can read accurately but monosyllabically, reading only one word at a time. The next stage is to develop fluency. This means being able to flow right through a sentence or phrase. Once children have learned to read accurately, they can then learn to observe punctuation. They can be encouraged to read a phrase right up to the next comma or full stop; to pause between sentences and to demonstrate an understanding of the underlying grammar of each phrase, clause, sentence or paragraph. A typical comment might be: "Henry read very well, accurately and fluently" or "Henry read very accurately today but needs to practise reading fluently through each sentence and observing punctuation."

Expression – once children have mastered accuracy and fluency, they can begin to learn to read out loud with expression. They can change their intonation and vocal inflexion in order to show that they understand exclamation marks and question marks. They can demonstrate their advanced comprehension of the writer's meaning and techniques for effect, by using different voices for the characters, moods and atmospheres. They are beginning to read in a way that entertains an audience or captures a listener's imagination; in the same way that a good teacher or enthusiastic parent would read to give pleasure to a child. A typical comment might be: "Emma read excellently today with fluency and expression" or "Emma read brilliantly with expression and enthusiasm." Children need to consolidate their reading skills by reading books that are easy enough for them to experiment with expression and a sense of drama.

Talk about the book

Sometimes, children read the book fluently, but they haven't always fully understood what they have read. Therefore, it is important to talk to your child about what they have just read – ask them questions to make sure they know what has happened in the book. Encourage them to predict what might happen next. Why do they think this?

Finally, if you have any concerns about your child's reading, do not hesitate to talk to their class teacher.

HAPPY READING!