

Early Reading – Pre School/ Early Reception

There are lots of fun and easy ways to help get your child ready to read. The most obvious way is through sharing and enjoying books together, but singing nursery rhymes, playing 'I spy' in the car and talking about your child's day can all help your child to develop important very early reading skills. Here are some simple ideas of things to try with your child.

Things to try with your child

1. Talk together

Spending some time talking to your child about their day, about their play and about things around them encourages the development of speaking and listening skills, so important when children go on to start learning to read.

2. Talk about books, words and pictures

Before you start reading a book, talk about the title, the pictures on the cover (front and back). Look through the pictures together and ask your child what they think the story might be about.

3. Talk about stories and events

As you read and when you've finished, sometimes ask questions about the story. '*What was your favourite bit? What do you think about that? What would you do?*' Get your child to ask you questions too. Don't overdo it though – otherwise you can lose the thread of the plot.

4. All join in

Start asking your child to join in with bits that are repeated in stories, e.g. '*Run run as fast as you can! You can't catch me I'm the gingerbread man!*'. Traditional stories, like The Gingerbread Man, are really good for this and children will love doing the voices!

5. Find your favourites and add to them

Children love to listen to their favourite books over and over again and to remember some parts by heart. That's fine as enjoyment and memory play a key part in learning to read. Add to their list of favourites by reading stories of all kinds, rhymes, poetry and information books too.

6. Retell stories

Sometimes after you have shared a story, ask your child to retell it to you. Help by asking 'What happened first? What next? And then what?' Can you remember what happens at the end?! Encourage them to use plenty of expression.

7. Read everywhere you go

Read on the move and show your child how you read words everywhere you go too. Point out words they might recognise, including signs and logos in the street or on labels.

8. Listen to and sing songs and rhymes

Singing lots of songs and nursery rhymes helps your child to hear the sounds in words and build up a bank of known favourites. Play with words and sounds and make up nonsense rhymes in songs or nursery rhymes they know. Encourage them to join in.

9. Remember when...

Compare events in stories or information books with things you've done together, so your child starts to make connections between these things and their own experiences: *'That's just like when we went to Thorpe Park. Do you remember? Dad was scared...'*

Early reading skills

1. Talk about letters and sounds

If you draw attention to letters and sounds, your child will begin to notice them as well. Knowing the letter sounds is a very important first step in early phonics teaching so start talking about these at the earliest opportunity.

For more help with letter sounds, [check out our phonics sound chart](#).

2. Signs that your child may be ready to begin learning early reading skills

There are no hard and fast rules about this but if your child can do these things then it may be that they are ready to begin learning early reading skills:

- listen to a story and retell bits of it
- recognise some letter sounds (like the first sound in their name)
- recognise some letter sounds (like the first sound in their name)
- match some words (like Mum) when they see them in different places
- concentrate for 5-10 minutes.

Early Reading – Reception

Your child will begin to start reading using a phonics-based approach. There are lots of things you can do to support this at home. At this stage they will still enjoy sharing picture books of all kinds with you, but will start bringing home simple decodable books from school too. Our decodable books are designed for your child to read and practise phonics. Here are a few ideas to make sure you make the most of all these different types of books.

Reading together

1. Read together every day

Reading with your child continues to be really important so keep reading lots of different books together. Most picture books will be too hard for a child of this age to read alone, but it's good for them just to listen to a story or information book and talk about the pictures with you.

2. Talk about the book before you begin reading

Before reading a book together, always talk about the title, the pictures and the information on the cover (front and back). If it's new, ask what your child thinks the book might be about. If it's an old favourite then talk about the bits you love most! Don't worry if some books get chosen again and again!

3. Read with different voices

When reading aloud use lots of expression and try different voices for different characters. Get your child to join in with bits too, such as, '*They pulled and they pulled!*' and '*Fee, fi, fo, fom...*'. See if your child can copy you!

4. Ask each other questions

Talk about the stories and information books when you've finished reading together and ask questions. *What did you like best? Why did the tiger let Floppy go? Have you ever played a trick on anybody?* Get your child to ask you questions too.

5. Retell stories and events

Ask your child about things that happened at school or with their friends. Sometimes, after you've shared a story or watched a TV programme, ask your child to tell you about it. Help them by asking *What happened first? What next? And then what?*

Early reading skills

1. Listen to your child read

Your child will bring home [decodable](#) books from school. Designed to allow your child to learn how to read independently, these books help children apply their phonic skills – sounding out the words on the page. Be patient and be impressed!

2. Link letter sounds to letter shapes

Your child will be learning letter sounds. Make sure you know how to [say the sounds correctly](#) . And don't forget that some words, like *said* and *the*, are [tricky](#) and can't be sounded out so keep pointing these out to practise them.

3. Looking at words and letters

After you have read a book, play letter-spotting and word games like these: *Can you find Dan's name on this page? Can you find the word 'and' on this page? How many words can you find on this page that begin with 't'?* Get your child to ask you too!

4. Sound out first...

If your child gets stuck on a word, check first if it can be [sounded out](#) or [blended](#) by saying the letter sounds individually and putting them together quickly to hear the word. If your child can't work out the word, then you say it and move on.