



Foundation Stage Reading Evening:
Helping your child learn to read

One of the most valuable things we can do for children is to help them develop a love of books and reading. The best way to do this is through sharing books, talking about them, and gradually helping children develop the skills that underpin independent reading.

Laying the Foundations

Children are all different and each individual develops at his or her own pace, but it's never too early to start sharing books and encouraging your child to talk about the pictures and text. You can lay the foundations of reading by:

- running your finger under the words as you read
- showing your child how to hold the book correctly, using the pictures to tell that it's the right way up
- showing how to turn the pages and follow the text from left to right and top to bottom
- helping your child tune into the sounds of the English language by choosing books with plenty of rhyme, repetition and patterned language
- returning to favourite books again and again. Repetition builds security and, eventually, independence - so if your child wants to share the same book over and over again, try not to let your weariness show!

As soon as your child shows an interest in print, you may want to teach him or her the sounds and names of the letters of the alphabet. Help your child recognise his or her own name (written in lower case) and a few other common words in your daily environment.

Gradually your child will want to be more actively involved in sharing books. Encourage him or her to:

- predict what will happen on the next page of a story, or make up an ending for the story
- join in with any repetitive words or phrases in a story
- 'read' stories from memory, turning the pages and using the pictures as prompts
- recognise some of the words in books 'on sight'
- begin blending letter sounds together to make simple words

If you are reading to your child ...

- try stopping at easily predicted words to let your child finish phrases for you
- take opportunities to ask your child what he or she thinks will happen next
- at the end, listen to your child's thoughts about the story, so he or she can practise vocabulary and develop understanding of the story line
- look at the Picture Words page, and see if your child can find any of the words in the story
- use expression
- look back through the story, and let your child read out any familiar words he or she has remembered
- encourage your child to join in with repeated phrases and patterned language as you re-read the book
- gradually encourage your child to take over the reading

If your child is reading to you ...

- find a quiet time and place so that you will not be interrupted.
- introduce the book and set the scene to get your child interested.
- offer help and support rather than letting your child struggle with words or phrases.
- choose from the following strategies when helping your child; your choice will depend on how much support you feel your child needs and wants:
 - supply the unknown word
 - point to a picture to provide a cue
 - ask a question to encourage prediction of the word
 - re-read from the beginning of the sentence yourself, to focus your child's attention on grammatical or context cues
 - point to the first letter of the word and draw on your child's knowledge of sounds, by encouraging him or her to sound out the letters in the word and blend these sounds together. Try to

If in doubt, supply the word - the most important thing is to develop your child's confidence and enthusiasm for reading, not to make it seem like a test or a competition.

When your child is familiar with a book, see if he or she can recognise the 'sight' words on the inside front cover. Most children find recognising words much more difficult when they are not part of a story.

Praise your child frequently to build confidence and enjoyment of reading.

What else can I do to help my child's reading development?

You can:

- draw your child's attention to words on packaging, on shop fronts and street signs. Play games such as spotting 'For Sale' signs or searching for particular letters on products in the supermarket
- involve your child in day-to-day reading and writing in the home, such as making shopping lists, writing cards and leaving messages. Talk about what you are doing, and let your child join in by copying or by doing his or her own writing
- play games with your child that reinforce knowledge of letter sounds, for example:
 - I spy with my little eye, something that starts with ...
 - I hear with my little ear, something that rhymes with ...
- play games with your child that develop memory skills and reinforce the alphabetical order of letters, for instance:
 - I went to market and bought a ...
 - In my grandmother's trunk I found a ...

(In these games, players compile a list, taking turns to add an item that begins with the next alphabetical letter.)
- play games with your child that develop memory skills and reinforce word recognition, for example:
 - guessing a word from a first letter on familiar items such as food labels and book titles
 - action songs and rhymes
 - games using cards on which there are pictures and words, DK Family Learning sells several *Snap* and other word games
 - spot the difference games
- listen to stories and rhymes on audio tape
- use educational CD-ROMs
- above all, read to your child. Even when he or she has begun to read independently, sharing books with a parent is the best way to increase vocabulary and lay the foundations of further reading skills. It also develops a love of reading and books, which is the most important factor of all.

Question Categories

Questioning provides an excellent way to develop children's understanding of the text. The following shows a variety of questioning techniques which can be used as a child progresses. The more complex techniques may be more suitable for more experienced readers.

The following suggestions may be helpful:

Literal questions: repeating directly, or in own words what the text says

- Can you tell me what happened when/who/where?
- What are the main points in this non-fiction text?

Inferential questions:

- Will _____ stay or leave?
- What makes you think this?

Deductive questions:

- Can you explain why you think this?

Asking for justification:

- Where does it say that?
- What in the text makes you say that?