

What To Do When Reading With Children



We learn to read so that we may read to learn, but more important is to learn a love of reading.

– Orin Cochrane

Your role as a supportive adult is to help children become reader/thinkers. Thinking is intrinsic to reading. Thinking should happen after reading, thinking *must* happen before reading - as readers set up expectations of what the book will be about, and it *must* happen during reading as readers confirm or disconfirm their predictions. As the co-reader, you must help children understand that you respect their thinking.

The best things you can do when helping a child learn to read:

- Devote time to it. Make it a quality experience. Show your own interest and pleasure.
- See yourself a co-reader – taking part and offering sensitive support. You're not there simply to be read to.
- Allow children to choose the text.
- Always remember, children are allowed to skip a word or two; come back to it; they can guess what a word is if they want to. – These are strategies used by real-life good readers. Fluency and meaning are what's important.

The worst things you can do when helping a child to read:

- Rush the experience.
- Ask children to read a text they haven't chosen for themselves.
- Control the reading.
- Focus only on the text!
- Insist on 100% accuracy in word-reading.
- Correct errors immediately – stopping the child's 'flow' or enjoyment of the text.
- Ask child to read a text 'cold', with no setting up of the story.
- Leave no time for discussion of response.

How We Read:

You may think that reading is all about pronouncing the words correctly and using only phonics - 'sounding it out'. This isn't the case.

There are three tools that we all use to read, these are:

1. **Grapho-phonetic** – letters and the sounds they make.

But please also encourage children to also use:

2. **Semantic** –using what they know about the story to guess what a word might be. – This can sometimes be aided by using the letter sound at the beginning of the word.
3. **Syntactic** – using what they already know about the sentence – again, this can sometimes be aided by using the letter sound.

➔ **Before you start, choose one of the following:**

- My favourite strategy is to read a paragraph and have the child read the same paragraph immediately after.
- Alternatively, read with (in unison) and drop out and join in when you feel it is right to (this can be done quietly, under breath).
- Share the reading. One page each.

➔ **When you start reading:**

- If you know some background about the book, share it with the child. This means they can begin reading knowing what to expect.
- If they have already started the book – have them briefly paraphrase what they have read.

➔ **During reading, encourage the following:**

- **Predicting**

Ask: what could it be? What's the opening sound of the word? Do: Cover up the word and have them guess and sometimes simply give the word.

- **Self-correcting**

Sometimes children will misread a word. That's OK; sometimes they will self-correct. You do not need to tackle every misread word, particularly if their choice makes sense in the context of the story.

- **Confirming**

Ask: does it make sense? Does the print confirm your guess?

- **Talk about both your responses to the text:** depending on level of the book - every paragraph/page or so.

In only one sentence, tell me about what we've just read.

What questions do you have?

What do you think will happen in the next?

➔ **After reading:**

Ask the child what they would give the book out of 10 so far. If it is a low score, ask them if they wish to drop the book and choose a new one. Explain that they should always read the first 20 pages of a book before they drop it. After 20 pages, explain that it is fine to drop a book if you don't like it.

What to write in reading record books?

Here are some suggestions you can definitely focus on:

Attitude & Style:

- Does the child read with: pleasure, enthusiasm, commitment, involvement, interest, ease, expression, fluency, confidence, stamina, understanding, rhythm, appreciation, independence, pace?
- Has the child made comments about: theme, humour or their own response – if so, what?
- Is the child willing/keen to talk about books with you; share/recommend them to other children?

Strategies:

- ✓ Does the child use the three strategies above - Or does the child over-rely on one?
- ✓ Does the child read for meaning or sense?
- ✓ Does he/she self-correct?
- ✓ Have a "re-run" of some sentences?
- ✓ Read on and then go back and fill in?
- ✓ Does the child use context or pictures to predict what is coming?
- ✓ Does the child pay attention to word-structure, letters – and to structure of language?
- ✓ Is the child progressing, developing, becoming more fluent and confident?