

Why is reading so important for my child?

- Creating a love of reading in children is one of the most powerful ways of improving your child's academic standards in school.
- The world of books offers a rich and diverse range of language and vocabulary.
- We know that being able to read underpins everything a child does in school and is directly linked to their self-esteem, confidence and achievements as they go through life.

Why do children need to enjoy reading?

- Developing a love of reading is part of the curriculum taught in school.
- Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.
- In fact, reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than other factors such as social or economic background.

How can I encourage my child to enjoy reading?

You can make a huge difference! Parents are the most important educators in a child's life – even more important than their teachers – and it's never too early or late to start reading together.

- Give reading status and importance by reading every day with your child.
- It is a good idea to share reading aloud as you can model pace, expression and fluency for your child.
- Use a 'story teller' voice.
- Encourage your child to read a range of texts such as comics, newspapers, non-fiction, plays and poetry etc.
- Encourage your child to read a series of books from a favourite author or books on topics of interest, especially to keep reluctant readers engaged in reading.
- Use plenty of praise.
- Visit the library and borrow books you enjoy reading together.
- Do not criticise when they get it wrong. Remember to be patient!

What can I do to help my child at home?

- Join a library together
- Have books everywhere
- Make time for reading – make it a positive event, something children can look forward to
- Read about something you're both interested in
- Remember that all reading is good
- Get comfortable
- Talk about reading (see question examples overleaf)
- Read whenever you get the chance
- Have fun, enjoy reading and treasure the shared experience!

"We need to stop reading being seen as something children just do in school and put it back into competition with computers, videogames, films and DVDs as a fun way to spend free time. Seeing reading as something that happens at home and is shared by everyone in the family is key."
Christopher Edge

What questions can I ask my child?

You can ask a number of questions when reading with your child. It is not necessary to ask every question each time your child reads, of course, but they may prove to be useful prompts to start a more focused discussion.

What has happened in the story so far?

What do you think will happen next?

Who is your favourite character? Why?

Who is the character you like least? Why?

Do you think the author intended you to like/dislike this character? How do you know? Does your opinion of this character change during the story? How? Why?

Find two things the author wrote about this character that made him/her likeable?

If you met one of the characters from the story, what would you say to him/her?

Which part of the story is your favourite/least favourite? Why?

Would you change any part of the story? How?

Would you change any of the characters? How?

Which part of the story was the funniest/scariest/saddest/happiest? Find some evidence in the text to support your opinion.

What is the purpose of this book? How do you know?

Why is this page laid out in this way? Could you improve it?

Pick three favourite words or phrases from this chapter. Can you explain why you chose them?

Did this book make you laugh? Can you explain what was funny and why?

Have you read anything else by this author? Is anything similar?

Does this book remind you of anything else? How?

When do you think this book was written? How do you know? Does it matter? What would it be like if it was written now?

Do you think the title of the book is appropriate? What would you have called it?

What is the genre of the book: sci-fi, mystery, historical, fantasy, adventure, horror, comedy? What are the features that make you think this?

Find two sentences which describe the setting.

Is the plot fast or slow moving? Find some evidence in the text, which supports your view.

If the author had included another paragraph before the story started what do you think it would say?

Would you like to read another book by this author? Why/why not?

Of course, it doesn't have to be you asking the questions. Why not turn the tables and let your child ask you about your reading material? The greatest encouragement for your child is to see you - their most influential role model - reading.