

Supporting Reading at Home

Sharing a book with a child is fun! It's a time for closeness, laughing and talking together – and it can also give children a flying start in life and help them become lifelong readers. Reading can help children to relax and unwind; simply, reading a book can make children laugh and feel happier! Through hearing stories, children are also exposed to a rich and wide vocabulary.

If you're not feeling confident about reading aloud or sharing books, don't worry – there's no right or wrong way to enjoy a story together. But if you'd like some tips, here are a few pointers to help you out.

7 Top Tips to Support Reading at Home

Shared reading is a great way to develop children's language and communication and to boost their reading skills. Regular reading routines can offer lots of opportunities for learning during school closures.

- 1 Concentrate on reading quality (it isn't all about reading lots!)**



Don't worry too much about the 'what' and 'how' of reading each day. Books are great—but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable reading. Be on the lookout for reading, wherever it is!

- 2 Ask your child lots of questions**



All reading matters. Shared reading is about 'reading with', not just 'reading to' (even for older children). So, ask lots of 'Wh' questions, such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? Try them when talking about books: for example, 'what do you think Harry is feeling?'

- 3 Ask your child to make predictions about what they have read**



If it is a book, look at the front cover—or the last chapter—and talk about what might happen next. Look for clues in the book and be a reading detective! For example, 'can you see the bear on the front cover? Where do you think he will go?'

- 4 Ask your child to summarise what they have read**



When you've finished reading, talk about what happened. Acting out the things that happened in the story or describing the big idea of a chapter is really fun and maximises learning. For example, 'can you remember all the things that happened on the bear hunt?'

- 5 Ask your child to write about what they have read**



Write, or draw pictures, from anything you've read! Big writing and pictures are even more fun. For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues from the stories you've read together.

- 6 Read and discuss reading with friends or family**



Make books a part of the family. Encourage your child to share them with a relative or friend, over a video call. Laugh about them when you are making meals together. For example, 'I hope the tiger doesn't come to tea today!'

- 7 Maintain the motivation to read**



Talk about the joy of reading whenever you can. Your child is on an amazing journey to becoming a reader. Put them in the driving seat and have fun on the way! For example, 'choose your favourite story for bedtime tonight.'

Education Endowment Foundation (2018)
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Education Endowment Foundation (2018)

Additionally, you could follow the link below to the Literacy Shed website where there is a set of question prompts that can be used when reading with your child at home. These questions cover the key skills your children will be working on in their reading lessons.

[Literacy Shed – VIPERS](#)

As children get older, with lots of other activities competing for their time, how can you encourage them to make time for reading? Here are some of our ideas:

- Find a regular time for reading in your child's day, so that they can begin to expect it as part of their routine. This can be any time of day. Some children enjoy reading before bed, but others can just be too exhausted at night. It might be better for some children to read just after dinner, or in the morning after breakfast, when they have more energy.
- Visit the local library together. It's always fun choosing new books to read, and keep an eye out for special author events at the library or local bookshops – children love meeting their favourite authors.
- Read yourself! It doesn't matter what it is – pick up a newspaper or magazine, take a look at a cookery book, enjoy some poetry or dive into a romance or detective novel. And get your children to join in – if you're cooking, could they read the recipe? If you're watching TV, can they read out the TV guide? Could they read the menu when you are out for a meal?
- Give books as presents. And encourage your children and their friends to swap books with each other – it'll give them a chance to read new stories, and get them all talking about what they're reading.
- Encourage children to carry a book at all times. That way, they'll never be bored (this is something you can do, too!)
- Have a family bookshelf. If you can, have bookshelves in your children's bedrooms, too.
- Don't panic if your child reads the same book over and over again. Let's be honest - we've all done it!
- Encourage your child to be the author. Build writing and drawing into your routine at home by helping your child tell a story. When telling stories, children are practising important language skills, such as past and future tense and transition words. You can model this behaviour, by telling them stories. Children love to hear stories about your childhood or other experiences, and it gives them inspiration for telling their own stories. Then, you can show them how to write or draw their story. They can draw it through pictures, or type it on a computer, depending on their age. For some children, becoming the author is the best way to activate their imagination and their interest in stories. Through their writing, you can learn about some of their interests and find books to match!
- Visit [Authorfy](#) – you can set up a free account to access author videos and masterclasses from bestselling children's authors.
- Create a cosy place or 'reading nook' in your home. Let your child decorate it with their favourite books and soft toys, so they look forward to going there to read. When you can, try to make sure they see you reading, or read with them, so they know adults read too!
- Finally, if you are reading the book to them, let them turn the pages, skip pages, return to pages and let them interrupt you – even if it feels like they are getting off track. Talking about the book helps them makes sense of what they are reading.

Recommended Reads

If you are looking for books to enjoy at home, we suggest visiting [Books Trust](#) or [Books for Topics](#) for recommended reads.