Sheddingdean Community Primary School

Helping Your Child Learn to Read: A Parent Tip Sheet

Helping your child learn to read is one of the most important ways that you can support his or her education. Studies show that parental involvement is key to student success. Children who read outside of school as well as in school, are much more likely to succeed.

The following tips are intended to assist you in helping your child become a skilled, confident reader:

1. Read to your child for at least 15 minutes each day.

2. When your child is reading, use a **"Pause, Prompt, Praise"** approach:
   - **a. Pause:** If your child stops at a difficult word, then pause briefly. Wait for a few moments (count to five, silently and slowly) to give your child the opportunity to figure out the word.
   - **b. Prompt:** If your child cannot read the word or does not read it correctly, ask him or her to "Try again" or ask "What word would make sense?" or say "Look at the picture". If your child still cannot read the word correctly after two different prompts, say the word and ask him or her to repeat it. Continue with the reading.
   - **c. Praise:** When your child reads the difficult word correctly, praise him or her for reading the word without help.

2. Choose books that are interesting to your child and that are "just right" — not too hard, but not too easy.

3. If asked by your child to read a favourite book over and over, do so.

4. Talk about reading with your child. Before reading a book, look at the pictures with your child and ask him or her to predict what the story might be about. Talk about your child's favourite books or characters. Talk about different ways that a story might have ended.

5. The more you and your child talk about the books they read, the better they will understand what they read. The following are useful points to touch on in your book discussions.
   - ❖ Discuss how the book makes your child feel
   - ❖ Compare and contrast the main characters in the story
   - ❖ Draw parallels between characters and real life situations faced by kids
   - ❖ Draw parallels between characters in the story and those in books read previously
   - ❖ Discuss "what-if" scenarios and make predictions about what happens next
   - ❖ Discuss "what would you do if this happened to you?" scenarios
   - ❖ Talk about what a character did and what it tells you about her

6. Let your child see you reading novels, the newspaper or other texts. When children see their parents do something, they interpret it to be a valuable activity.

7. Read to your child books that were your favourites when you were a child, and talk about why you loved them.

8. Ask your child to picture the story as you read it.

9. Encourage your child to write about the stories that you have read together. Writing is an excellent support to reading.

10. Play letter and word games like Scrabble.

11. Encourage your child to "read" to you, even if he or she is not yet old enough to actually read the words on the page and is just following the pictures. This important activity, generally believed to be a step to early reading, will help your child to build confidence and an understanding about stories.

12. Create a home library or visit the public library regularly. Provide a variety of different reading materials: books, comics, newspaper, recipe books, computer software and an encyclopedia.

13. Point out words on street signs, cereal boxes, packaging for toys, etc.

14. Practise word solving strategies: look at the first letter of a word, reread, sound out words or skip a difficult word and read to the end of a sentence for clues as to what the word might be.

15. Show your child how much you value school and learning. Visit your child's class and talk to the teacher about his/her reading progress.

16. Do not stop reading to your child when he/she learns to read. There is much value to be gained from reading to your child until he/she reaches the teen years.

17. Take books wherever you go: to the restaurant, to visit relatives, in the car, on the bus, to the doctor's office.

18. Ask your child to read the recipe for you when you are cooking.