



St Peter-in-Thanel CE Junior School

Parents' Reading Booklet

How to help children become readers



The greatest gift you can give children is to read to them from a very early age

You don't have to be an expert.

There's no magic in supporting children's reading, just lots of patience, time and affection, plus a little skill.

Be an actor!

Look interested.

If it's a frightening book, look scared.

If it's funny, then laugh.

If it's a mystery book, look puzzled.

Give the impression that you are happy as long as they are doing their best.

Always end on a 'high note'.

Tips for encouraging children when they are trying to figure out a word or get stuck

Always give readers a few seconds to have a think first, unless it's a really unusual word or a name.

Picture Prompts - try looking at the picture - is there a clue? Close your eyes and imagine what is happening.

Decoding strategies

(look at the word you are stuck on closely).

1. What sound (called phonics) does it begin with?
2. Does it look like any other word you know?
3. Can you see smaller words inside?
4. Can you cover part of the word and see if you recognise the bit that's left?
5. Are there any pairs/patterns/sets of letters you recognise?
6. Has it got an ending you recognise?
7. Can you 'sound it out'? (Phonics)
8. Try reading the sentence again from the beginning.
9. What word would make sense?
10. What words would sound right?

If a child is still stuck on a word that won't build up e.g. 'brought', tell them the word.

What to do if a child makes a mistake when reading to you - when do you stop him or her?

- 1. If what he or she has read makes sense, let him/her carry on until there is a suitable break - end of sentence, paragraph or page.**

Say something like: 'You read that really well and it made sense, but look at that word. You said *****. Check it again.'

- 2. If it makes no sense, stop straight away.**

Say: 'You're doing well but that doesn't make sense. What sort of clues will help us sort out the word?'

Helping children understand what they are reading about

A good reader understands what the writing is about and is either enjoying the story or learning something.

As well as reading the story, talk about the pictures. If there's a picture of a dog in the book talk about a dog you know.

Talk about the characters in the picture and how they might be feeling. Talk about the use of illustrations to support the text.

Make up your own story to go with a picture.

Ask lots of questions about the story.

Empathise with the characters.

What would you have done if you were...?

How would you feel if...?

Does this book remind you of anything that has happened to you?

Can you guess what is going to happen next?

What do you think the author feels about...?

If sharing a non-fiction book, ask them questions about the information read and discuss the layout of the text.

Praising a child during reading sessions

Children will accept constructive criticism if it's got something positive before and after.

Very young or struggling readers need constant reassurance. Smiles and nods are often sufficient, except at the end of a session when you should always try to say something positive.

The best kind of praise is that which tells the child exactly what has pleased you. For example:

I liked the way that you checked the pictures for clues.

I liked the way that you realised that didn't make sense and checked again.

I liked the way you made that sound like a question.

I liked the way that you covered part of the word and read it a bit at a time.

I liked the way that you didn't give up.

Choosing a book

One way of selecting a book for a child that you know well is to imagine that child reading 10 lines (about 100 words). If there are no more than 5 words he/she would get stuck on, it should be OK. Any more than 5 and it will probably be too hard for him/her to enjoy.

But go for interest and excitement rather than an exact level - you can always read the book to them!

The idea is to fill the child with enthusiasm to tackle the book as soon as he/she's ready.

Don't just encourage children to read books - there are lots of other things to read...

Comics	Newspapers	Notes/messages
Ceefax/subtitles	Shop signs	Adverts
Tickets	Food wrappers	Vehicle signs
	Road signs	

A Good Reader -

is fluent and interesting to listen to when reading aloud

is accurate, makes few mistakes -
particularly when reading non-fiction

is understanding what he/she has read.

**To be a really good reader
you need to be good at all three!**

