

Tips for parents on helping with reading for pleasure at home

Make time to read.

Reading at bedtime instead of staring at screens can have the added benefit of improving sleep patterns. A good night's sleep makes for happier, better behaved children who are able to concentrate more in lessons, so it is a win-win for everyone!

Be positive.

Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's all right to make mistakes. If they don't know what a word means, then help them to look it up. Many online dictionaries will also help with pronunciation.

Take an interest in what they are reading.

Ask them about the characters, whether they have a favourite one, do they like the plot or the style of the book? If they don't like it then reassure them that it is OK not to like a particular book and that they should try something else.

Try reading one of the books they have read.

This is a great way to be able to have a more detailed conversation about the book which improves reading comprehension skills.

Reading should be fun.

For children to become a lifelong reader it is important that reading is seen as a pleasurable leisure activity and not a chore. That is why it is important to find the right book which grabs their interest. It may take many different attempts for this to happen so don't give up, keep trying and remember there are no 'right' or 'wrong' books

Pictures tell a thousand words.

We learn to read pictures before we learn to read text, and this is a skill which gets better with practice. If your child prefers books with lots of pictures then don't worry, they are busy developing their visual literacy skills. Many find that if the text is broken up by pictures the book is more enjoyable and manageable. Comic books, picture books and illustrated chapter books are all a great way to enjoy reading and may be particularly useful for children with dyslexia or English as an additional language as the pictures can help them understand the text.

Model reading for pleasure.

If you can find the time to sit down and read a book or magazine/newspaper yourself, try and do it at a time and place where your child can see you doing it. By showing your child that you enjoy reading you are modelling the behaviour that you want them to do. This is particularly important for Dads and other male members of the family as boys often say that they have only seen women reading for pleasure at home and this can reinforce the idea that reading isn't for them.