

For parents/carers: reading stories to children

Introduction

Eventually, your child will bring home two books. One will be for your child to read to you. It will be carefully chosen so that they can work out all the words themselves, using their knowledge of phonics.

The other book has words your child may not be able to read yet.

For the moment, this is the only book that your child will be bringing home, but this will change fairly soon.

This is for you to read to your child and talk about together.

How to read a story to your child

If you can find the time beforehand, read the read-aloud book to yourself first, so you can think about how you're going to read it to your child.

On the first reading:

- Make reading aloud feel like a treat. Make it a special quiet time and cuddle up so you can both see the book.
- Show curiosity about what you're going to read: 'This book looks interesting. It's about an angry child. I wonder how angry he gets...'
- Read through the whole story the first time without stopping too much. Let the story weave its own magic.
- Read with enjoyment. If you're not enjoying it, your child won't.
 - [Also, it's helpful to follow the words from left to right as you read them, with your finger: this helps train your child's eyes to track from left to right in preparation for the reading process.]

Read favourite stories over and over again.

On later readings:

- Let your child pause, think about and comment on the pictures.

- If you think your child did not understand something, try to explain: 'Oh! I think what's happening here is that...'
- Chat about the story and pictures: 'I wonder why she did that?'; 'Oh no, I hope she's not going to...'; 'I wouldn't have done that, would you?'
- Link the stories to your own family experiences: 'This reminds me of when ...'
- Link stories to others that your child knows: 'Ah! Do you remember the dragon in? Do you remember what happened to him?'
- Encourage your child to join in with the bits they know.
- Avoid asking questions to test what your child remembers.
- Avoid telling children that reading stories is good for them.