



## **Supporting your child with reading homework**

Reading together should be a positive and rewarding experience for all concerned. Many parents are able to share books with their child from a very early age and find that their child is happy to read with them. Indeed, for some parents, they can feel disappointed when their child becomes so independent with their reading that they no longer wish to read with them.

However, for some parents, reading homework can be a challenge as some children do find reading a chore rather than a pleasure. The following suggestions, which are not comprehensive, should hopefully help to make reading homework a more pleasurable experience for everyone. However, please do come and discuss with your child's class teacher if you are still finding reading homework challenging to complete.

### **The reading environment at home....**

- Should be quiet and as free from other distractions as possible.
- Should be comfortable and relaxing.
- Needs to allow parent and child to look at the pages of the book together in the early stages.
- Needs to remain a positive experience. Use lots of words of praise and encouragement and be patient. Learning to read is quite tricky and some children find it more challenging than others.

### **Sharing books before your child can read words.....**

- Discuss what is happening in the pictures.
- Model reading the words by pointing to them as you read.
- Ask your child to guess what might happen next or what a page might be about.
- Talk about initial sounds of words or any rhymes in the text.
- Talk about features of a book using words such as title, page and author.
- Discuss characters and what they do in the story.
- Talk about differences and similarities between story books and information books.

### **Sharing books at the early stage of reading.....**

- Share the reading of words.
- Encourage your child to have a go at less familiar words by using the initial sound(s).
- Give your child a few seconds to work out any words they are finding challenging. Be patient.
- Read words for them which they are still finding challenging after several seconds.
- Use lots of praise when they successfully read less familiar words.
- Use lots of encouragement if they are becoming despondent.
- Play games such as reading alternate words or sentences or asking your child to complete each sentence you read.
- Remind them how well they are progressing (look what you can read now that you couldn't read before).
- Show that you are interested in the book.
- Encourage your child to read to different people or even the family pet or a cuddly toy.
- Read little and often – make reading a part of your daily routine.
- Allow your child time to self-correct if a reading error does not make sense.
- If a reading error does make sense, wait until your child has reached the end of the sentence before going back to the mistake.
- Ask questions during the reading of a book and after it has been read. This can really help with understanding.

### **Supporting reading at home with more independent readers.....**

- Remind your child about the value of reading regularly.
- Encourage them to read books they choose themselves as well as their set homework.
- Continue to be positive and supportive.
- Continue to ask questions about the book both during reading and after completing a book.
- Talk about the meanings of words to make sure your child has understood. It is easy to make assumptions.
- Model how to use a dictionary to help understand words in books.
- Explore different types of books / texts so that your child can see the great variety out there and make their own reading choices. The library can be really useful for this.
- Set reading challenges such as completing three new books in a month or reading a book by an author they have never heard of.

### **Independent readers....**

Hopefully your child will be happy to read at this point but some children enjoy reading more than others. Remind your child about the need to complete any set reading homework so that they can participate in subsequent reading lessons in school but encourage them to read whatever they choose. Any sort of reading will develop reading skills. What we are all aiming for is individuals who can and want to read, who value reading and who read for both purpose and pleasure. Reading is a life skill and, for many, is also a great way to relax.

### **Example questions to discuss during the reading of a book....**

- What is this character doing?
- Why do you think the character is doing this?
- What would you do if it were you?
- How do you think this character is feeling now? Why?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What does this page tell us about?
- What did you think was the most interesting fact on this page? Why?

### **Example questions to discuss after a book has been read....**

- Did you enjoy this book? What was it that you enjoyed about it?
- Was there anything you did not like about this book?
- Did you like the ending or can you think of a better / different one?
- Can you retell the story to me in your own words?
- Can you tell me about your favourite character /event / fact in this book?
- Which words did you find easy / tricky to read? Why?

Useful web links with additional ideas:

[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk) – great book recommendations and age appropriate book lists.

[www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk) – links to online games and activities which support reading and other literacy skills.

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