



IMPROVING READING

Working together to help our children succeed!

Nothing is more important to academic achievement than being a good reader. You know your children best and can provide the one-to-one time and attention that will lead them to success in reading. Current research reveals three important things for parents/carers to consider:

- Children who read, and read widely, become better readers.
- As children get better at reading their writing skills also improve.
- Parents are important to children both as role models and as supporters of their efforts.



SO HOW CAN YOU HELP?



1. SET ASIDE A REGULAR TIME TO READ TO YOUR CHILDREN EVERY DAY

Studies show that regularly reading out loud to children leads to significant improvements in reading comprehension, vocabulary and the decoding of words. Whatever your child's age, it will increase their desire to read independently. Continuing to read aloud is particularly important as children become more independent because it is an important way to develop their reading for meaning and comprehension skills.

2. SURROUND YOUR CHILDREN WITH READING MATERIALS

Children with a large range of reading materials in their homes do better in tests. Tempt your children to read by having a large supply of appealing books and magazines at their reading level.



3. GET YOUR CHILD'S READING LEVEL 'JUST RIGHT'

Children become better readers by *regularly* reading books that are at the appropriate level for them. Children who only read books that are 'too easy', that is books significantly below their reading level, will, naturally, not improve as quickly since they are not being introduced to many new words, sentence structures and patterns, and are not required to learn and practise new comprehension strategies. Likewise, books that are 'too challenging', that is books significantly above their level, may lead to children becoming frustrated, which is completely counter-productive. The main goal is that they should enjoy reading.



4. HAVE A FAMILY READING TIME

Establish a time of 15 to 30 minutes at the same time each day when everyone in the family reads together silently. Seeing you read will inspire your children to read. Just 15 minutes of daily practice is sufficient to increase their reading fluency.

4. ENCOURAGE A WIDE VARIETY OF READING ACTIVITIES

READ! READ! READ! Make reading part of your children's everyday life. Get them to read menus, road signs, instructions for games, weather reports, film listings, and other practical everyday information. Also, make sure they always have something to read so that they can use opportunities, such as waiting for appointments or during car rides, to improve their reading.



5. DEVELOP THE LIBRARY HABIT

Entice your children to read more by taking them to the library every few weeks to get new reading materials.

6. BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

Find out what reading skills they are expected to have at each age and stage of their education. Track their progress in acquiring basic reading skills in their school reports and in standardised tests.

7. LOOK FOR READING PROBLEMS

Try to identify any reading problems before they become serious. Find out if your children can sound out words, recognise sight words, use the context to identify unknown words, and clearly understand what they read.



8. GET HELP PROMPTLY FOR READING PROBLEMS

Reading problems do not magically disappear with time. The earlier children receive help, the more likely it is that they will become good readers.

9. USE A VARIETY OF AIDS TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN

To help your children improve their reading, use textbooks, computer programs, books on CD, and other materials available. Games are especially good choices because they let children have fun while they work on their skills.



10. SHOW ENTHUSIASM FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S READING

Your reaction has a great influence on how hard your children will try to become good readers. Write comments in their reading records which you will find in the book folders they take home. Praise small steps in their reading. Learning is a continuous process.....it's about making little steps on the way to becoming skilled. Remember to remind children about their starting point, highlight and celebrate their steps to success along the way. They will feel more confident, better able to take on the next challenge and less likely to want to give up. AND ... beware of making comparisons with other children!