

My child reads confidently but never seems to remember or understand what he/she has read. What can I do?

There are some children who do seem to read on 'automatic pilot' without really absorbing what they are reading. If you are sure that illness or tiredness are not affecting his/her concentration then you should check whether the subject matter of the book is within your child's understanding. Talking about the book with your child, before and after reading, may help to focus his/her attention or get a clearer picture on their understanding of the world around them. Early on in the book ask him/her to tell you what has happened so far and what he/she thinks may happen next. Continue this strategy at regular intervals throughout the book. Make a game of encouraging him/her to anticipate or predict the plot. You do it too. Then read on until you discover who was right.

At home my child reads nothing but comics and magazines. Does this matter? How can I encourage my child to read 'better' books?

When children are reading comics and magazines they are learning that reading can be fun and amusing. However, if comics are your child's only reading matter and your child becomes used only to the language, pictures, simple plot and characters of comics, he/she may find it difficult to read anything else. You could ask your child's teacher which books your child chooses in school. As a first step you could provide books connected with your child's interest or hobby.

At what age should I stop hearing my child read?

If your child enjoys reading with you continue to share books as you always have. It is a lovely special, sharing time. However, as children get older and become fluent readers it is not as important to listen to your child read but it is still very important to discuss the book with your child. This develops their higher order reading skills of inference and deduction. These become increasingly important as your child moves through KS2.



My child and their reading – FAQs

What can I do at home to help my child read?

Make reading fun. Continue to read stories to your child; share an enjoyment of stories and build up a small selection of stories which your child enjoys. Give them plenty of encouragement to finish sentences, guess what might happen next and praise their efforts even if they do not read everything correctly. Play games such as 'I spy', sing the alphabet songs and recite nursery rhymes. Have a set of magnetic letters on the fridge door. Draw attention to writing around the house, favourite cereals, your child's name on a letter, the name of your street, encourage your child to suggest items for the shopping list and see you write the name of the suggested item. Children like to copy their parents and it will help to encourage their interest in reading if they see you reading whatever that may be – books, newspapers or magazines.

My child has 2 or 3 favourite books which he/she enjoys hearing over and over again. I feel we should be moving on. What should I do?

Please do continue to read and reread favourite books to your child. Beginning and early readers enjoy hearing familiar and favourite books over and over again because they are gaining and learning from this experience. You will find your child begins to notice if you miss out a part of the story. This is because he/she is predicting from his/her experience what will come next – a vital part of learning to read. You will find your child will start to 'read' along with you and say the last word of a sentence. He/she is learning both about the structure of a story and how words are combined in a certain order to build sentences. Your child will be able to 'read' his/her favourite story to you because repetition has given him/her the opportunity to practise skills of recalling and retelling the story – all fundamental to the reading process. By re-reading favourite stories you are helping your child to develop many skills and attitudes about reading and it is a pleasurable and enjoyable activity.

When is the best time to hear my child read?

Choose a quiet time when you both want to read. Try to avoid interrupting a favourite game or TV programme. Some children find a daily routine helpful and enjoy having a special reading time such as after tea or just before going to bed.

Should we try to use phonemes to help our child read?

Phonemes are sounds made by single or groups of letters and are used to build words. In the early stages of reading, the ability to recognise first sounds and last sounds in words is very useful. Your child's teacher will be happy to talk to you about the best approaches to use to develop your child's reading.

How long should I spend listening to my child read?

In the early stages little and often is the best idea. 10 minutes is a reasonable time, beyond this children may lose concentration. However there is no reason why you shouldn't carry on a little longer if your child is interested and involved in a particular story.

What if I can't find time to read with my child every day?

Perhaps your child could read with other people – brother, sister, grandparents and of course to themselves. It can be a rewarding experience for both when older children read to a younger brother or sister.

What should I do when my child doesn't want to read?

Reading should be enjoyable so do not force your child or become angry if your child doesn't want to read to you. It may be that they are simply feeling tired or out of sorts. Instead, choose a favourite book and read to your child instead.

My child reads without expression – how can I help?

Children often do not realise how they sound when reading aloud. When they are still in the process of learning to read it is too much to expect them to think about how they sound while they are concentrating their skills upon understanding the text. As children become more fluent readers, and/or become familiar and more confident with the text, they can be encouraged to put more expression into their reading. Make a point of praising them when they do, saying things like, "Well done! Your voice went up and down when you read that –just like when you are talking or telling a story." You can also help by modelling reading with expression and asking your child to copy how you have just read.

What if my child chooses a book which is too easy for him/her?

Do not worry if your child has a series of reading books which are less demanding. Children sometimes enjoy re-reading less challenging books just for the fun of it. If you find that your child often chooses what you feel are 'easy' books, however, please talk to the class teacher who will be happy to explain the reason for such choices. It may be that a period of reinforcement is required or that revision of specific items is needed. Easy books give your child an opportunity to practise the reading skills they have been learning and help to develop fluency.

Why is my child slow to read?

Children are individuals and learn different things at different speeds. There are many children who make a slow start but then make rapid progress. Others continue to make progress at a steadier pace than others. A few children may have specific difficulties and, if you suspect this, do bring your concerns to the attention of your child's class teacher who will be happy to advise you.

My child sometimes brings home books which are too difficult to read without help?

It sometimes happens that children are enthusiastic about a 'challenging' book which appeals to them. The book may be written by a favourite author, there may be some connection with a TV series or the subject may be something they are particularly interested in. If this happens then the best thing to do is to share the book. This may mean that you have to do most of the reading. It may be possible for you to read one page and your child to read the next. Your child will probably continue with enthusiasm if the book has some personal appeal or interest.

What should I do if my child gets stuck on a word?

If the word is unusual or 'difficult' then say the word allowing your child to continue without losing the sense of the story. Alternatively, you can ask your child to guess what word would make sense in the sentence. You can help by reminding your child what has happened, by drawing attention to the pictures or the first sound in the word.

When my child reads aloud, I notice that he/she leaves out some words. Does this matter?

If the text your child is reading is making sense then omitting the odd word does not matter. If an omission interferes with the meaning of the text then do encourage your child to re-read the sentence.

What can I do to help my child who keeps losing his/her place when reading?

You could help by tracing your finger **above** the line of print or encouraging your child to use a book mark again **above** the line of print. In this way your child can see the next line of print and continue to read steadily and not be forced into line-by-line reading which is often the effect of using a bookmark below the line currently being read.

What else can I do to encourage my child to read?

Join the local library together and choose books that you can enjoy together.