

# Helping your child to read



In the **early stages** of learning to read, it is important to help children develop skills at different levels. We can do this by reading with them and by:

- Talking about using stories and using story language
- Using clues in the pictures to help them to understand the story
- Using the 'context' (what comes before and after a word in the sentence) to help make sense of the story
- Developing a knowledge of 'phonics' (how sounds are represented by individual letters and combinations of letters)
- Helping them to recognise common words by sight so that they aren't having to struggle to work out all the words

# Listening to stories

**From the time they are babies**, you can help children become readers by:

- Sharing your enjoyment of books
- Reading stories and talking about the pictures
- Comparing events in books with your own shared experiences
- Pointing out signs and logos when you go shopping
- Teaching them nursery rhymes and songs

# Starting to read

- Try to make time to read to and with your child every day. Choose a time when you are not too busy and when your child is not too tired
- Read favourite stories again and again. Children love this!
- Build confidence by reading lots of books at a suitable level, and continue to re – read earlier books. If you push children to read books that are too hard, they are likely to lose interest

# What skills do children need at an early stage?

- Enjoy sharing and talking about books
- Recognise their own name
- Recognise some letter sounds (for example, some of the sounds in their name)
  
- **At this early level** children's reading relies on the following:
- **MOTIVATION** – If your child is inquisitive about how reading works, they will find the process much more interesting
- **MEMORY** – Don't be concerned if your child seems to be memorizing rather than reading the book (and **PLEASE** don't cover up the pictures!). Memory is a key skill for reading.
- **CONCENTRATION** – Most children won't be ready to read until they can sustain concentration for 5 – 10 minutes

# Understanding print in the early stages

## – story and meaning

- Before you read a story with your child:
- Talk about the title and the pictures on the cover
- Look through the pictures together
- Talk about what you think the story might be about
- Read the story to your child (it's not cheating!)
- Don't stop to talk on the first read through
- **Point to the words as you read, matching one spoken word to one written word.**
- Re – read the story with your child, encouraging them to join in with repeated phrases. Talk about the pictures and discuss what's going to happen next.

# Understanding print – words and letters

- When you have read the story, you can then start to draw attention to the words and letters.
- Check that your child knows where to start reading and that print is read from left to right.
- Draw attention to the starting sound of a word and then ask them to find another word with the same letter sound
- Ask them to find two words that are the same

# Moving on....Starting to read!

- **What skills do children need?**
- Recognise a few common words by sight (for example *said, the*)
- Retell a simple story
- Read a simple sentence using pictures to help
- Recognise some letter sounds at the beginning of words (for example the 'd' in *dog*)
- Begin to blend sounds they record



# Understanding print – story and meaning

- Talk about the title and front cover picture to predict what the story might be about
- **Point to the words as you read, matching one spoken word to one written word**
- Talk about what's happening and what will happen next

# Understanding print – words and letters

- Play word – and letter – spotting games, for example *‘Can you find the word ‘mum’ on this page?’* or *‘Can you find something in the picture that begins with the sound ‘b’?’*

# Becoming a reader

- Look at the pictures together before you read, discussing what you think the story might be about.
- Read aloud any words that might be tricky
- Read any repeated phrases. This will help your child recognise them when they read the book on their own.

# Understanding print – story and meaning

- Continue with all the earlier activities
- Talk about all the events in the story: *What happened first? Then what happened? What happened in the end?*
- Help them to talk about their feelings about the story
- If your child loses the meaning of what they are reading, ask them to stop and think about what the word or sentence might mean, using a variety of strategies:
- Reading to the end of the sentence and then deciding on a sensible word to fit the gap
- Re – reading the sentence
- Using the picture
- Using the letter sounds
- If they still can't read the word, read it for them.

# Understanding print – words and letters

- Point out letters that go together, for example, *th, sh*
- Draw your child's attention to speech marks, punctuation, sound effects and action words (for example *BUMP, ZOOM*)

# Building confidence in reading and reading with confidence

- Reading and enjoyment
- Try sharing a book together – you read one page and your child reads the next. This has three main advantages:
  - You are modelling what **fluent** reading sounds like
  - The book is completed more quickly, and your child is more likely to want to re – read it
  - If your child loses the meaning of the story while they concentrate on reading their pages, they can pick up the meaning again while you are reading.

# Understanding print – story and meaning

- Children who are reading at these stages should be encouraged to:
- Re – read the text when it doesn't make sense
- Work out tricky words, using meaning and pictures as well as phonics
- Make links between events in books and their own lives (*I remember when....*)
- Use expression when re – reading a text

# Understanding print – letters and words

- Help children to focus on chunks in words, rather than individual letter sounds, for example *camp / ing*.
- When your child is stuck on a word, help them to:
- 
- Sound out chunks of the word
- Re – read the sentence to create a meaningful context
- Read on to the end of the sentence



# My child appears to be reading better than age expected.

- Some children read with fluency and accuracy at an early age, rarely making mistakes.
- It is crucial to have a good understanding of what the story or book is about – to be able to answer questions about the characters, storyline, plot or to make predictions. If a child is unable to recall information from the book it indicates that their brain is not processing the information that has been read. It is vital to encourage your child to discuss the story, otherwise reading simply becomes a meaningless code.

Think about.....



# Driving a car

- When you first started to drive there are lots of things to remember.
- However, with practise the process becomes easier and more fluent.
- Reading is the same – the child needs to use visual information (the print) and meaning (understanding the story) and syntax (correct use of grammar)
- It's a complex procedure!!!!

# Putting it all together

- A successful reader can use the visual information, the meaning and syntax together. They are also able to self correct and notice when something isn't quite right
- E.g. “The bus goed down the street”

Here the child has make a grammatical error, but they may notice that it doesn't sound right. Allow them some time to self correct before you jump in to tell them, this shows how well they are monitoring what has been read – Think of a road map!