

PAIRED (OR SHARED) READING

This is a strategy to use when an adult and a child are reading together. The aim is to build your child's confidence, fluency and expression, which will also improve their reading comprehension. The focus should not be on errors, so ensure that the book is not too difficult for your child, although it is better if your child chooses the book, as he will be more motivated to read a book he likes. It is hoped that this strategy will also engender a love of books and reading.

Paired reading should take place in a relaxed atmosphere, for about 10 minutes a day; do not do more than 15 minutes unless your child really wants to carry on. If you have not got time to do it every day, grandparents, older siblings, friends or neighbours can help. Try to find a place that is quiet and comfortable, so that it is an enjoyable experience for both of you.

Stage 1 – Reading together

1. Your child chooses a book; it should be one that is generally within their reading ability.
2. Read aloud together, not too quickly – try to make your speed the same as your child's. Your child reads fractionally behind the adult, or simultaneously if they can.
3. If your child makes a mistake, the adult says the correct word, the child repeats it and moves on. Do this daily, for about 10 minutes each session.

Stage 2 – Independent reading

1. Use the same book (or choose a new one for a more experienced reader).
2. Arrange a signal, such as a tap on the book, for your child to use to indicate that they want to read alone.
3. Adult and child begin reading together.
4. When your child gives the agreed signal to indicate that they want to read alone, the adult stops reading.
5. If your child makes a mistake, the adult gives the correct word, the child repeats the word, and adult and child continue reading together until your child gives the signal that they want to continue to read alone again. Do not make your child struggle to read the word, 'break it down' or 'sound it out' – this will interrupt the flow of the reading.

Praise your child for reading well – make general comments like ‘Good’ but also specific comments like ‘Well done, you read all the words in that sentence’, ‘Wow, you got that really hard word right’, ‘You really read that with expression’, etc. This can be much more meaningful to your child than just saying ‘Good’, and shows that you have really noticed what they are doing.

Stage 3 – Discuss what you have read

It is also useful to discuss the book with your child to develop their comprehension. At various intervals, ask open ended questions that encourage them to think about what they have just read, e.g.:

- What do you think?
- Why do you think that?
- How can you be sure? Is there another way/reason/idea?
- What if.....?
- What do you think happens next?
- What is happening in the picture?
- What is the story about?
- What do you most like/dislike about the story?
- How do you think it will end?

Above all, enjoy the experience of reading with your child – it is a precious time.