

Tips to Engage Reluctant Readers

Berwick St Mary's CE First School



This information sheet is designed to initiate ideas to support your child's reading development at home. These strategies may or may not be appropriate for you and your child, and are simply a starting point to encourage a love of reading from those children who may be initially a little reluctant to read.

Find Material that Excites

It sounds obvious, but children (especially boys) are more likely to read when they find stories about things they find fascinating, like *Harry Potter*, or relatable, like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Stories that transport readers to another time and place they could only visit in their imaginations are also great options, simply find a book that links to an interest of your child, dinosaurs, trains, fairy castles, whatever the theme there will always be a book.

Explore Different Formats and Genres

With today's technology, there is a huge selection of reading material available, both online and in book form, so think outside the box when considering what your child might enjoy. Joke books, seek-and-find books, mystery, science fiction, comics, graphic novels, and nonfiction about typical kid-favourite topics (think: dinosaurs) are all great places to start. Make sure they are age-appropriate and the right reading level so your child doesn't become frustrated or bored.

Set a Good Example

Parents lead by example. If your child never sees you reading, s/he's not likely to pick up a book on their own either. Make time in your day to read and talk to your child about something you're reading that you enjoy. Even if you don't have a lot of time to spare, these 15-minute reading activities are quick and fun ways to incorporate reading into your daily schedule.

Designate a "Reading Nook"

Set up a special place in a quiet area for your child as "his/her" reading space. Make it cozy with pillows and blankets, and stock it with books on subjects and activities that interest him/her. Having their own space to go and read will make it seem special and will likely encourage them to do more of it.

Pair Reading with Play

Fun activities that require reading, such as making a new recipe, creating a scavenger hunt, putting on a play, or making your own holiday cards to send to family and friends, help show your child that reading isn't just about sitting down with a book. Engaging them in non-book activities will help them realize that it relates to a lot of things that s/he finds enjoyable, and isn't just a chore.

Read Books that Have Been Made Into Movies

Seeing a book come to life on screen is a fun way to motivate your child to read. Start off by reading one of these kids' books that have been turned into movies together, and watch the screen adaptation when you're finished. Talk about the plots, characters, and story lines, and ask your child to describe the differences between the book and the movie. Talking about the characters, and how they measured up on screen versus how she imagined them in print, will get her excited to read more

Read in Public

Listening to a book is just as good as reading! Show your child that a lot of people, kids and adults alike, enjoy books by going to your library's story-hour or a book reading. Community plays are another good activity — attending one can help your child realize that literature doesn't just come in book form, but can be acted out as well. Additionally, if a kid-favourite author is coming to town for a book signing, take her to meet the author and treat her to a newly signed copy.

Be Tech-Friendly

Nothing beats reading a real book, but you can also use technology to your advantage. Use the internet to explore kid-friendly eBooks on topics that interest your child. Amazon.com offers a list of current bestselling children's books, and Author Marketing Club monitors Amazon and keeps a daily list of free eBooks currently being offered, broken up by genre. Archive.org also contains a large collection of children's books available for online viewing or download.

You can also download a few cool reading apps for kids. Whether s/he wants to write and illustrate his/her own story, create an interactive experience with sounds and animation, or find recommendations from kids their own age, there's an app that can help.

Encourage Book Sharing

Host a book swap at your house and ask all of your child's friends to bring a book to share. It's a great way to expose kids to new material and will get everyone talking about what they like to read, and why. Your child's friends likely have a lot of the same interests as s/he does, so they'll probably have books s/he'll want to read, too.

Reading Tips for Parents of Nursery Children



Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

Talk to your child

Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.

Say silly tongue twisters

Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

Read it and experience it

Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.

Use your child's name

Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word jump begins with the same sound as your name. John, jump. And they both begin with the same letter, J."

Play with puppets

Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is Mark. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does park rhyme with Mark? Does ball rhyme with Mark?"

Trace and say letters

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

Write it down

Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage her to use the letters and sounds she's learning about in school.

Play sound games

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? m - o - p." Hold each sound longer than normal.

Read it again and again

Go ahead and read your child's favourite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.

Talk about letters and sounds

Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmm."

Read together every day

Read to your child every day. Make this a warm and loving time when the two of you can cuddle close.

Give everything a name

Build your child's vocabulary by talking about interesting words and objects. For example, "Look at that airplane! Those are the wings of the plane. Why do you think they are called wings?"

Say how much you enjoy reading

Tell your child how much you enjoy reading with him or her. Talk about "story time" as the favourite part of your day.

Read with fun in your voice

Read to your child with humour and expression. Use different voices. Ham it up!

Know when to stop

Put the book away for a while if your child loses interest or is having trouble paying attention.

Be interactive

Discuss what's happening in the book, point out things on the page, and ask questions.

Read it again and again

Go ahead and read your child's favourite book for the 100th time!

Talk about writing, too

Mention to your child how we read from left to right and how words are separated by spaces.

Point out print everywhere

Talk about the written words you see in the world around you. Ask your child to find a new word on each outing.

Reading Tips for Parents of Reception Children



Give your child lots of opportunities to read aloud. Inspire your young reader to practice every day! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

Don't leave home without it

Bring along a book or magazine any time your child has to wait, such as at a doctor's office. Always try to fit in reading!

Once is not enough

Encourage your child to re-read favourite books and poems. Re-reading helps kids read more quickly and accurately.

Dig deeper into the story

Ask your child questions about the story you've just read. Say something like, "Why do you think Clifford did that?"

Take control of the television

It's difficult for reading to compete with TV and video games. Encourage reading as a free-time activity.

Be patient

When your child is trying to sound out an unfamiliar word, give him or her time to do so. Remind to child to look closely at the first letter or letters of the word.

Pick books that are at the right level

Help your child pick books that are not too difficult. The aim is to give your child lots of successful reading experiences.

Play word games

Have your child sound out the word as you change it from mat to fat to sat; from sat to sag to sap; and from sap to sip.

I read to you, you read to me

Take turns reading aloud at bedtime. Kids enjoy this special time with their parents.

Gently correct your young reader

When your child makes a mistake, gently point out the letters he or she overlooked or read incorrectly. Many beginning readers will guess wildly at a word based on its first letter.

Talk, talk, talk!

Talk with your child every day about school and things going on around the house. Sprinkle some interesting words into the conversation, and build on words you've talked about in the past.

Write, write, write!

Ask your child to help you write out the grocery list, a thank you note to Grandma, or to keep a journal of special things that happen at home. When writing, encourage your child to use the letter and sound patterns he is learning at school.

Reading Tips for Parents of Key Stage 1 Children



Find ways to read, write, and tell stories together with your child. Always applaud your young reader and beginning story writer! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

Tell family tales

Children love to hear stories about their family. Talk about a funny thing that happened when you were young.

Create a writing toolbox

Fill a box with drawing and writing materials. Find opportunities for your child to write, such as the shopping list, thank you notes, or birthday cards.

Be your child's #1 fan

Ask your child to read aloud what he or she has written for school. Be an enthusiastic listener.

One more time with feeling

When your child has sounded out an unfamiliar word, have him or her re-read that sentence. Often kids are so busy figuring out a word they lose the meaning of what they've just read.

Invite an author to class

Ask an author to talk to your child's class about the writing process. Young children often think they aren't smart enough if they can't sit down and write a perfect story on the first try.

Create a book together

Fold pieces of paper in half and staple them to make a book. Ask your child to write sentences on each page and add his or her own illustrations.

Do storytelling on the go

Take turns adding to a story the two of you make up while riding in a car or bus. Try making the story funny or spooky.

Point out the relationship between words

Explain how related words have similar spellings and meanings. Show how a word like knowledge, for example, relates to a word like know.

Use a writing checklist

Have your child create a writing checklist with reminders such as, "Do all of my sentences start with a capital? Yes/No."

Quick, quick

Use new words your child has learned in lively flash card or computer drills. Sometimes these help kids automatically recognize and read words, especially those that are used frequently.

Make books special

Turn reading into something special. Take your kids to the library, help them get their own library card, read with them, and buy them books as gifts. Have a favourite place for books in your home or, even better, put books everywhere.

Get them to read another one

Find ways to encourage your child to pick up another book. Introduce him or her to a series like The Boxcar Children or Harry Potter or to a second book by a favourite author, or ask the librarian for additional suggestions.

Crack open the dictionary

Let your child see you use a dictionary. Say, "Hmm, I'm not sure what that word means... I think I'll look it up."

Talk about what you see and do

Talk about everyday activities to build your child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together, visiting somewhere new, or after watching a TV show.

First drafts are rough

Encourage your child when writing. Remind him or her that writing involves several steps. No one does it perfectly the first time.

Different strokes for different folks

Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of writing. Some kids, especially boys, prefer nonfiction books.

Teach your child some "mind tricks"

Show your child how to summarize a story in a few sentences or how to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend and remember.

"Are we there yet?"

Use the time spent in the car or bus for wordplay. Talk about how jam means something you put on toast as well as cars stuck in traffic. How many other homonyms can your child think of? When kids are highly familiar with the meaning of a word, they have less difficulty reading it.