

Tips from Mrs Heaton on helping your child to learn to read

Reading is the most important skill you can help teach your child. Here are a few tips to help engage your child at home.

Talk to your children (a lot)

Starting from a very young age! Talk about your eyes, nose, ears, mouth, and fingers. Talk about your family. Talk about whatever she/he did (yawning, sleeping, eating, burping). Talk so much that other parents think you are going crazy! But reading is a language activity, and if you want to learn language, you'd better hear it, and eventually, speak it. Too many parents and guardians feel a bit silly talking to a baby or young child, but studies have shown that exposing your child to a variety of words helps in her/his development of literacy skills.

Read to your children

Everyone says this, but it really is a good idea! Even with Nursery aged children. If reading is an issue at home as there are difficulties or can't read English, there are alternatives, such as using audiobooks; but for those who can, reading a book or story to a child is a great, easy way to advance literacy skills. Research shows benefits for children as young as 9-months-old, and it could be effective even earlier than that. Reading to children exposes them to richer vocabulary than they usually hear from the adults who speak to them, and can have positive impacts on their language, intelligence, and later literacy achievement. What should you read to them? There are so many wonderful children's books. Visit your local library, and you can get an armful of adventure.

Have them tell you a "story"

One great way to introduce children to literacy is to take their dictation. Have them recount an experience or make up a story. A typical first story may be something like, "I like dancing. I like my pet dog. I like mummy." Write it as it is being told, and then read it aloud. Point at the words when you read them, or point at them when your child is trying to read the story. Over time, with lots of rereading, don't be surprised if your child starts to recognise words such as "I" or "like." (As children learn some of the words, you can write them on cards and keep them in a "word bank" for your child, using them to review later.)

Listen to your child read

When your child starts bringing books home from school, have her/him read to you. If it doesn't sound good (mistakes, choppy reading), have her/him read it again. Or read it to her/him, and then have her/him try to read it themselves. Studies show that this kind of repeated oral reading makes students better readers, even when it is done at home.

Promote writing

Literacy involves reading and writing. Having books and magazines available for your child is a good idea, but it's also helpful to have pencils, crayons, markers, and paper. Encourage your child to write. One way to do this is to write notes or short letters to them. It won't be long before they are trying to write back to you.

Ask questions

When your child reads, get them to retell the story or information. If it's a story, ask who it was about and what happened. If it's an informational text, have your child explain what it was about and how it worked, or what its parts were. Reading involves not just sounding out words but thinking about and remembering ideas and events.

Make reading a regular activity in your home.

Make reading a part of your daily life, and children will learn to love it. Take your child to the library to get books. Set aside some time when everyone turns off the TV and the web and does nothing but read. Make it fun, too. Read books that have been made into a film, then make popcorn and watch the movie together. ***The point is to make reading a regular enjoyable part of your family routine.***

If you would like any further help and guidance, please feel free to ask.

Mrs L. Heaton
Happy reading!

Useful online websites which include phonics games and activities for children to do at home:



www.readingeggs.co.uk



www.phonicsbloom.com



www.phonicsplay.co.uk



phonics games - Topmarks Search



free online phonics games for kids children phase 1 2 3 4 5 EYFS KS1 letters and sounds (timeforphonics.co.uk)