

# Helpful Hints



**Little and often** ~ It is better to read for ten minutes every day than for an hour twice a week.

**Point to words and mark a line** ~ It is crucial that children run a finger under the words as they read them. It helps immensely to use a bookmark and hold it under each line as you read it, thus hiding the rest of the text. Move the bookmark down as you read the whole page.

**Take one!** ~ Choose one of the skills which are bullet-pointed inside this leaflet. Focus upon this particular skill for a week or more, so that you can be confident that your child has mastered this. Then you can move on to another skill.

**Take turns** ~ Take turns in reading - you read a bit and then ask your child to read a bit. This can be less tiring and keeps the story flowing.



**Read to as well as with** ~ Read for a short while and choose books that you can both enjoy. Do NOT stop reading TO your child. It is very important that your child continues to enjoy listening to stories and loves sharing books with you.

**There are two aspects to teaching a child to read:**

**Technical skills** ~ We help children to decode the text, working out what each word or sentence 'says' and to use grammar and punctuation to help them read.

**Understanding** ~ Children need to make sense of what they read. They should be able to talk about what they have read, understand what has happened in a story and predict the end!

**In this leaflet we help you support BOTH these aspects when reading with your child.**

# Technical aspects of learning to read

## Starting to read

Help your child to:

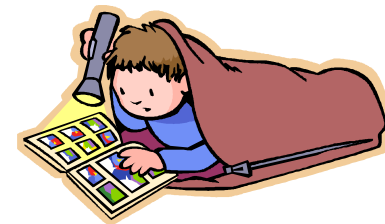
- Correct own mistakes as they are reading, realise something is wrong and go back to read it correctly.
- Point at each word with a finger as they read it.
- Use a variety of ways in reading unfamiliar words:
  - Sound out the words using their phonics skills;
  - Identify tricky words that cannot be sounded out;
  - Use spelling patterns, looking at the endings or at other parts, e.g. 'ough' or 'ight' or 'ation';
  - Look at the prefixes or suffixes to help, e.g. 'sup' or 'ad' at the start or 'ed' or 'ing' at the end;
  - Miss the word out to find out what type of word it is;
  - Make a guess based on the context.
- Recognise and respond to punctuation, especially full stops, question marks and exclamation marks.



## Reading for pleasure

Help your child to:

- Recognise that they have made a mistake and correct it themselves.
- Follow a line of text, using a bookmark under each line as they read along it.
- Use a variety of ways to read unfamiliar words, including checking if it is similar to a word they can read, looking for spelling patterns and breaking the word up into its different parts.
- Respond to punctuation and use this to help their reading.



# Making sense and understanding what you've read

## Starting to read

Help your child to:

- Make guesses and predictions about the story as they read further into it.
- Remember details of what happened, where and when and be able and willing to talk about these things.
- Discuss own likes and dislikes in relation to different books, giving a reason for their opinion.
- Identify the characters in a story, and say which of these is the main character.
- Recognise and say who is telling the story.
- Look for and find particular information in a non-fiction text, knowing that the 'Contents' page may help.
- Relate a story to their own experiences and be able to put themselves in the position of a character in a story.

## Reading for pleasure

Help your child to:

- Give opinions about which books they like, and which they do not like. Refer to particular features of the books to give reasons.
- Recognise the style of a particular author.
- Notice and comment on features of different types of book, both fiction and non-fiction.
- Retell the main parts of a story in order.
- Identify the different characters in a story and talk about what they are like and why they act as they do.



# Golden Reading Rules

**DON'T** think that because your child can make his way through simple school reading books without too many mistakes that he has mastered reading. Fluent confident reading will take years of practice.

**DO** find things for your child to read which centre on his non-school interests. Try to help your child to understand that reading is something we do for fun and not just at school.

**DON'T** think that books are the only or best way to practise reading. Comics, magazines and some websites are also great ways for your child to get enjoyable reading practice.

**DO** let your child see you reading for enjoyment from time to time. It is true that children do as we do, not as we say.

**DO** read some of the same things that your child reads. It's nice to be able to talk to someone else about what we've read.

**DON'T** criticise or pressurise your child if they're not that keen on reading. Instead try to find reading material about their hobbies or interests which might encourage a reading habit. But if they're still not interested take a step back for a little while.

**DO** encourage your child to lend books or comics to friends and let him borrow them from others. This might spur them on to reading even more, and it helps to keep your costs down.

**DO** let your child use the internet to learn more about her interests but **DON'T** allow them to have unsupervised access.



# Congratulations!



Your child has gone past the first stage of learning to read. They no longer need to point at every word and can read or 'decode' many of the words in simple books. Of course they are not yet a totally fluent or confident reader, able to tackle anything they comes across. That takes years of practice. And as parents, it's our job to help provide as many opportunities for that practice as possible. So, how can you help them to keep going?

**Follow your child's interests:** Is your child mad about video games or football? Dolphins or High School Musical? Whatever their interests, there will be something out there to grab them (while improving their reading skills)! Your job is to find that something! And remember, reading isn't just about books - magazines, comics and the internet are all excellent places to find appropriate levels of reading material for your child.

**Variety:** There are so many different kinds of text out there: websites, recipe books, comics, instruction manuals, football magazines, information books and, of course, stories. Each is organised in a different way and requires different reading skills. The more experience and practice your child has tackling each of these, the better a reader they will become.

**Reading with your child:** Some children and parents carry on reading together at bedtime for years. Even if your child doesn't want to do this, do read what they are reading from time to time. It is still fun to talk to someone else about favourite stories or articles, even if your child has read it independently.

**TV tie-ins:** Nowadays there are often fiction and non-fiction books based around films and TV programmes, whether it's Mamma Mia or Doctor Who. Even looking at a programme's website is a great opportunity for reading practice which can lead to your child discovering further reading material which she might be interested in.

**Make books special:** Try to put a bookshelf in your child's room or somewhere else in your home just for your child's books. This helps to give books status, whether they have been bought, given as a present, borrowed from the library or are lent by a friend.

**Comics and magazines:** There are lots of children's magazines and comics on the market, so it's quite likely that there's one out there your child will enjoy as well, whether they're into football, kittens or Transformers. Why not help your child to order his favourite comic from your local newsagent and let him collect it every Saturday?