

Hot tips to share with parents

1. Start with what interests your child. If your child is interested in horses then that is the best place to start. Visit bookshops, libraries, stables, movies . . . places where your child can find books, brochures, videos, software programs that are of interest. The key is providing a way to read the material. If the book is too difficult, try recording it chapter by chapter for your child to read along. Take it in turn to read one page each or for struggling readers try one sentence each. This helps your child fill in any of the meaning that may have been lost and helps with unfamiliar words.
Start with what interests your child.
2. Don't make reading together a test. Take a walk around your surroundings and read the signs as you go. Read a magazine or newspaper together. Sit back and relax while your child reads to you. You do not have to follow along with every word nor do you have to watch over your child's shoulder. From afar you can say things like ' . . . oops, that did not make sense to me. Take another look at that.' Rather than become the instant word factory, make suggestions like: 'Try reading on, go back to the beginning of the sentence and reread that for a clue'; 'Look at the pictures, what does it look like might happen?'
Enjoy reading together and vary what you read.
3. Before starting to read, support your child to be successful rather than set them up to fail.
Find ways to support your child to be a successful reader.
4. Browse through the book before reading begins and discuss the illustrations, any unfamiliar words (like the names of characters or places in the story), and the sequence of events in the story. This activity takes very little time but ensures that your child has the confidence to start.
Give your child the time and space to read alone.
4. Give your child the time and space to read alone. Trust that if your children want to read by themselves that they are gaining sufficient meaning from the book to find it satisfying. All you have to do is be excited about their efforts to read independently and ask questions such as: 'That looks like a really interesting book, what is it about?'; 'Where are you up to, what has happened so far?'; 'I would like to read that book . . . are you enjoying it? Tell me about it.'
5. Support your children's efforts by making sure they have a reading light. Providing a small CD player or laptop computer so children can read along in the privacy of their own space could also be an enticement into the world of books. Check that they have a place to store their books – make it feel like a valuable collection of precious things. Books should be visible as a reminder – they could be stored on a shelf, in a specially decorated box, or put between book holders on top of a cupboard.
Support your child's efforts by making books and reading special.
6. Let your child choose what they want to read and just keep opening up the invitation to the smorgasbord of books available. Say things like . . . 'I found this really interesting comic book today. Would you like to read it or something else?'
Let your child choose what they want to read.

'Do you know that Paul Jennings has a new book out. Would you like to read that? You might want to borrow it from the library next time we visit.'

'Let's look at this book of poems and see if there is one that you would like to read.'

'Here are five books from your shelf, which one would you like to read tonight?'
7. Funny books, mysteries, unusual stories often appeal to children who are in the process of discovering the joy of reading. Wanting to read is an essential ingredient so do not spend
Help them discover what they really like to read by offering a variety of books.

time worrying about whether a book is the right reading level or that comics are less appropriate than books, or chapter books are better than picture books etc – enjoy the fact that your child is reading. Good readers discover what they really like.

8. Take time to talk to your child about their good experiences of reading at school

Take time to talk to your child and discuss what they are reading and share their experiences with them.

– books they liked listening to the teacher read, favourite authors, poems that they remember. Start a collection of family favourite poems or a folder of information about favourite authors – locate their websites and send them an email. Together visit the local library once a week – make it a routine for you to borrow as well as your child. Do not take ownership of your child's choices. The important thing is to find a way to share the books borrowed either by reading them together or allowing your child to borrow them to look at the illustrations and pictures. Not all books are read cover to cover and a lot of books are appealing because of their wonderful photographs or drawings and they do not need to be read in a traditional sense. Enjoy the experience of looking at books and talking about them together.

9. Reading and writing go hand in hand. When it comes to writing, again it is not a test. Children need real reasons to write. Start with their interests

Reading and writing go hand in hand. Start with their interests and give them real reasons to write.

– if your child is an avid sports player, start with a camera and photo album. Labelling the photos or writing stories could be suggested. Make the suggestion but do not take it personally if your child does not like your idea. The idea is to keep making suggestions.

10. Stay calm and relaxed when your child makes mistakes or forgets a word. If you get frustrated, change the situation by looking for the positives things your child has accomplished in the reading. Say things like:

Stay calm and relaxed and positive while your child learns to read with you.

'I really enjoyed how you sounded like the old man in the story.'

'I can see that you understand how to use punctuation.'

Other suggestions to encourage writing:

- scanning photos and making a family book with accompanying favourite things for each person in the book
- emailing
- making books and using scrap art techniques to decorate it
- writing lyrics for songs
- drawing and labelling designs



'Your voice got louder when you saw that exclamation mark.'

'Do you realise that you read four pages tonight?'

'What did you like about this book?'

Or simply say 'How many more pages would you like to read and then I will read the rest?'

11. Remember that your relationship with your child is ultimately more important than any book, word or reading session. The thing your child will remember in twenty years time is that

Leave happy memories of your reading together. Your relationship with your child is more important than any book or reading session.

you spent precious time reading together on a regular basis. Do not underestimate the importance of the quality time you share because when your child is an adult he or she will well remember the name of the book that you both loved.