

# Experimental Reading

In this developmental phase, children use memory of familiar, predictable texts and their developing sound/symbol knowledge to match some spoken words with written words. Experimental readers are focused on understanding and conveying the meaning of these texts rather than reading all words accurately. They read and comprehend texts with repetitive and known vocabulary and supportive illustrations.

Some of the reading behaviours you may notice include, when your child...

- realises that print remains constant, i.e. that the words of a written story stay the same
- focuses on making meaning of a story rather than on reading words accurately
- uses their prior knowledge and personal experience to make meaning of text
- matches some spoken words with written words when reading a book or environmental print e.g. advertising signs, stop signs etc
- knows that print goes from left to right and from top to bottom of a page
- recognises a word as a unit of print with space on either side.
- shows one to one correspondence between spoken and written words, e.g. may begin pointing to words as they are reading from memory.

## What parents can do at home to support their child:

- Continue to have children's books as a high priority in your home. Ask for books to be given to your child as presents, give them to others as gifts. Have a library membership. **Keep promoting the love of reading.**
- Read to your child as often as you can, try to make it part of your daily routine.
- Encourage and allow your child to select the text. *Put aside a book if your child has lost interest and choose another.*
- Talk about the pictures when reading to your child and give them time to look at illustrations before turning the page.
- Answer your child's questions even if it interrupts the flow of the story.
- Encourage your child to join in when reading familiar stories.
- Encourage your child to read to you, or to the cat, a little brother or sister.
- Continue to support the reading of a familiar book. Remember, familiarity helps build self-confidence and fluency.
- Accept your child's efforts. **Always encourage and praise their efforts.**
- Encourage your child to look at the title and cover of a book and guess what it may be about.
- Encourage your child to tell the story from the pictures in the book.
- Talk about the characters, plots and settings of stories, e.g. *"Which was your favourite character? Why"*
- Encourage your child to express opinions about texts.
- Compare the people and events in books with those in your own lives.
- Tell stories and sing songs in the car, at bath time, at bed time.
- Talk about environmental print, e.g. jars, cereal boxes.

