

Initialit-F

Home reading information for parents and carers



Supporting your child at home

Why do we need to do reading at home?

Children need a lot of practice to develop their reading skills to the point of fluency. Ten minutes of daily reading at home with a supportive adult can make all the difference. This will enable children to demonstrate how to apply their letter-sound knowledge to reading simple text. Reading at home should be a successful and positive experience. If it is turning into a very stressful time, please do consult your child's class teacher for advice. By the time appropriate books are coming home, children will be familiar with what to do with them.

What kind of readers will my child bring home and why?

The readers that your child will bring home will contain words that they can 'sound out'. This will enable children to use their knowledge of letter-sound relationships that they have been taught in class. You will notice that the vocabulary in these books is very controlled. This is because at this early stage of the reading process, words need to follow regular sound-symbol patterns (e.g., dog, fan, hop) so that children are given opportunities to work out the words for themselves, with your support. Guessing words from a picture or from context should not be encouraged. The stories, by necessity, will contain some tricky words in line with the tricky words that children are being taught. These are words that cannot be sounded out in the same way and should be previewed.

How should I support my child when reading at home?

Follow the procedures set out in the Initialit-F Home Reading Diary. When your child gets stuck on a word, encourage him/her to have a go at sounding out the word. If necessary, demonstrate what this looks like first. Remember to praise with abundance when your child is successful at working out a word, or when your child goes back to have another go. Never tell your child to 'guess' a word or use the picture to help them: always keep the focus on letters and sounds. Learning to read initially requires a lot of effort for many children and at this early stage much patience is required. Do not expect them to be reading overnight! It is important to build up confidence and allow children to enjoy success as they work out words with your help. If your child stumbles over a tricky word that can't be sounded out, simply give him/her the word and ask him/her to repeat it. 'Tricky words' can be practised at home, using the list at the back of the Initialit-F Home Reading Diary. Only practise the lists that have already been taught in the lessons. Finish by checking that your child has understood what has been read.

How often should my child read with me in a week and for how long?

As part of the Initialit program, home readers will be sent home towards the beginning of Term 2. By this time your child will have been taught several letters and sounds in class to be able to 'sound out' words in the home readers. The class teacher will decide how many books will be brought home each week. Books can be read several times to build confidence. Your child should spend up to ten minutes reading with you, about four times a week.

When is the best time to do home reading?

Provide a quiet place at home with no distractions so both you and your child can focus on the task at hand. It is a good idea to provide a rest or snack immediately after school, prior to commencing home reading so that your child is well rested and fresh. Try not to rush the session or leave it too late in the day. Creating a positive reading experience is vital.

How should I use the Initialit-F Home Reading Diary?

Each term your child will be given a new Initialit-F Home Reading Diary. Each Home Reading Diary contains helpful information about reading with your child. These instructions will help you to engage your child with the book. Keep a record of what your child has read and which books you have read to your child.

What else can I do to support my child at home?

There will be many, many informal opportunities to develop your child's language at home. Talk to your child, using interesting vocabulary. Explain new words. Join a local library and borrow books to read to your child daily. Talk about the stories you read to your child. Restrict screen time and replace with opportunities to develop oral language. Help develop your child's curiosity about language and the sounds within words by playing word and sound games such as 'I Spy'. Teach your child nursery rhymes. Revise the sounds for the letters that they are learning and help them work out words using their sounds. As the year progresses, practise the tricky words that they have learned. The most important thing is to keep it light and playful but purposeful.