



Helping your child to read

Reading together

Reading should start in the first few months after birth. Even if as an adult you don't read often, or don't particularly like reading, it is important that you spend this valuable time with your child to stimulate their language development, and to encourage their love of reading. Reading together is a valuable thing to do. Reading increases your child's vocabulary, expands your child's understanding of the world, and gives them confidence when using language. Reading is also an important way to make the link between spoken words and written words.

Here are some general tips:

- Visit your local library to select and read books together, and to attend story time sessions. Library story time sessions are a great way to share the joy of reading with your child in a group setting.
- Encourage your child to select books, magazines, catalogues, or multimedia stories according to their interests.
- Set aside time for reading every day. Reading before bedtime is a good habit to get into.
- Position yourself so your child can see the words and the pictures.
- Run your finger across the page with each word to help your child identify and remember words and sounds.
- Share wordless picture books to develop imagination, ideas and vocabulary by naming and describing things in pictures.
- Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books. This will help develop your child's love of language.
- When reading to your child, read stories with expression, or try putting on the voices of characters. This will help make reading fun.
- Point out important features about a book – for example, the words and pictures, the front cover, the spine, the contents page, or the title.



- Discuss the meaning of unknown words that children hear and read. Explore words using a dictionary. Have a discussion and ask questions about interesting words you find, for example, “It says here she ‘tumbled’ down the hill. How do you think she went down the hill?” It says here “He read a ‘good’ book. What is another word we could use besides good?”
- Encourage your child to take over some or all of the reading if they feel confident.
- If your child is confident with their reading, allow them to read without interruption. Fluency is gained with confidence. Mistakes can be discussed after a block of reading, or in subsequent readings.
- Allow your child to read at their own pace. Model good pace when you read to them.
- Give your child the opportunity to re-read books.
- Read and talk to your child in family languages and encourage others who speak different languages to use these with your child.
- Let your child see you and other family members read for pleasure. It is especially important for boys to see the men they care about reading.
- Encourage your child to join the Victorian Premiers’ Reading Challenge, which runs each year from March to September. Participating early childhood services and schools will register your child – otherwise you can register your child at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/premiers-reading-challenge?Redirect=1#for-students-parents-and-early-childhood-services>