



Reading at home

Do you remember your favourite books as a child? Maybe you were lucky enough to regularly read stories or even have someone to read you a bedtime story before you drifted off to sleep? You won't have known at the time, but those experiences were the vital building blocks of your future.

Reading, being read to, and sharing books in the home helps to build a child's vocabulary and understanding of the world. Research shows, children who start school with good vocabulary and communication skills make friends more easily, have fewer behavioural issues and are more likely to do well academically. A strong, early foundation in language has even been linked to better mental health as children get older.

Reading with your child or encouraging your child to read independently for just twenty minutes each day can make all the difference.

Are you getting your TWENTY ?

Regular reading impacts a child's success at school.
If not addressed early the educational gap widens...



Student A

Reads **20 minutes** per day
3,600 minutes per school year
1,800,000 words per school year



Student B

Reads **5 minutes** per day
900 minutes per school year
282,000 words per school year



Student C

Reads **1 minute** per day
180 minutes per school year
8,000 words per school year



----- In standardised assessments they are likely to score -----

90%

50%

10%

7 Top Tips to Support Reading at Home

Shared reading is a great way to develop children's language and communication and to boost their reading skills. Regular reading routines can offer lots of opportunities for learning during school closures.

- 1** Concentrate on reading quality (it isn't all about reading lots!)



Don't worry too much about the 'what' and 'how' of reading each day. Books are great—but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable reading. Be on the lookout for reading, wherever it is!

- 2** Ask your child lots of questions



All reading matters. Shared reading is about 'reading with', not just 'reading to' (even for older children). So, ask lots of 'Wh' questions, such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? Try them when talking about books: for example, 'what do you think Harry is feeling?'

- 3** Ask your child to make predictions about what they have read



If it is a book, look at the front cover—or the last chapter—and talk about what might happen next. Look for clues in the book and be a reading detective! For example, 'can you see the bear on the front cover? Where do you think he will go?'

- 4** Ask your child to summarise what they have read



When you've finished reading, talk about what happened. Acting out the things that happened in the story or describing the big idea of a chapter is really fun and maximises learning. For example, 'can you remember all the things that happened on the bear hunt?'

- 5** Ask your child to write about what they have read



Write, or draw pictures, from anything you've read! Big writing and pictures are even more fun. For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues from the stories you've read together.

- 6** Read and discuss reading with friends or family



Make books a part of the family. Encourage your child to share them with a relative or friend, over a video call. Laugh about them when you are making meals together. For example, 'I hope the tiger doesn't come to tea today!'

- 7** Maintain the motivation to read



Talk about the joy of reading whenever you can. Your child is on an amazing journey to becoming a reader. Put them in the driving seat and have fun on the way! For example, 'choose your favourite story for bedtime tonight.'

Tips for reluctant readers...

- Visit the library with your child when you go into town.
- Try a 'phone free' hour and put books around the house. Eventually (out of boredom) they will start to re-read their favourite series or read something new.
- Be enthusiastic about what they are reading: Ask them to describe a character or to read aloud an exciting bit. You might read a teen/YA book yourself; the plot-driven nature of many of these books means they are relatively easy reads - perfect after a day at work.
- Let your children see you reading for pleasure and talk about what you read and how you choose books.
- If you have younger children, ask your older (reluctant reader) child to read aloud to them. This is a big confidence boost and it helps with sibling bonding.
- It sounds a bit odd but children can also read to pets. Parents have reported that their child would read aloud to the dog for ten minutes a day which got reluctant readers' back into reading.
- Continue to read aloud to your children (even if they are fluent readers). A recent survey highlighted that high on the list of things that teenagers miss is being read to. Choose a book together that they probably wouldn't read on their own.
- Read picture books! They are beautifully told, full of rich vocabulary and are over very quickly which means children don't have to wait for the story to conclude.
- Another idea is to find the book version of a movie: Stormbreaker, Eragon, Harry Potter, The Book Thief, I am Number Four, The Princess Diaries, The Chronicles of Narnia, Percy Jackson The Series of Unfortunate Events, The Secret Garden, Inkheart and Wonder are all films based on children's books. You can read the book, watch the movie together -- then discuss the differences or argue about which is best!
- Have them pick up a device - an e-reader/phone! Then check with your local library about borrowing e-books or try the Kindle daily deal. BorrowBox is a great free APP which enables you to borrow books or audio books to your device. You can even download the newspaper or a magazine.