



Reading at Home

Information for parents and carers.



HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD?

A Helpful Guide to Cultivating a Love for Reading in Your Child

Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.” — Margaret Fuller

Reading at Home



THE BENEFITS OF READING

Did you know?

Research shows that reading has benefits in many areas of education and life. In addition to the obvious benefits on reading comprehension and attainment, it also impacts upon:

- Vocabulary
- Understanding of grammar
- Spelling skill
- Writing attainment
- Attitudes to reading and writing
- Knowledge and understanding of the world and other people
- Achievement in other subjects, including maths
- Empathy and understanding of emotions
- Development of our sense of 'self' and identity

Let's take a closer look at some these benefits

Reading supports achievement in other subjects because it helps to access the wider curriculum. Even maths attainment has been proven to benefit from reading skill because, in order to use maths skills, students are required to read and understand the questions they faced with.

Research shows that reading can help reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing. Linked to this, we know that research shows the numerous benefits of a good night's sleep, which can be significantly helped by reduced screen-time. Therefore, a bedtime routine which includes reading could help with relaxing before bed.

“Because reading is so integrated into every aspect of modern life, teaching reading really is equipping children for the future.



Understanding students who struggle with reading

Reading is a fundamental skill that is crucial to academic success. However, some students may have trouble reading. As a parent, it's important to understand why some students struggle and how to help them overcome these challenges.

One reason why students may struggle with reading is due to a learning disability, such as dyslexia. These students may have a hard time decoding and recognising words, and comprehending what they read. Early identification and specialized instruction and accommodations can help these students succeed.

Another reason for reading difficulties could be a lack of exposure to reading outside of school. Students who don't have access to books or come from homes where reading isn't emphasized may struggle with basic reading skills. Encouraging reading for pleasure and providing access to a variety of reading materials can improve a child's reading abilities.

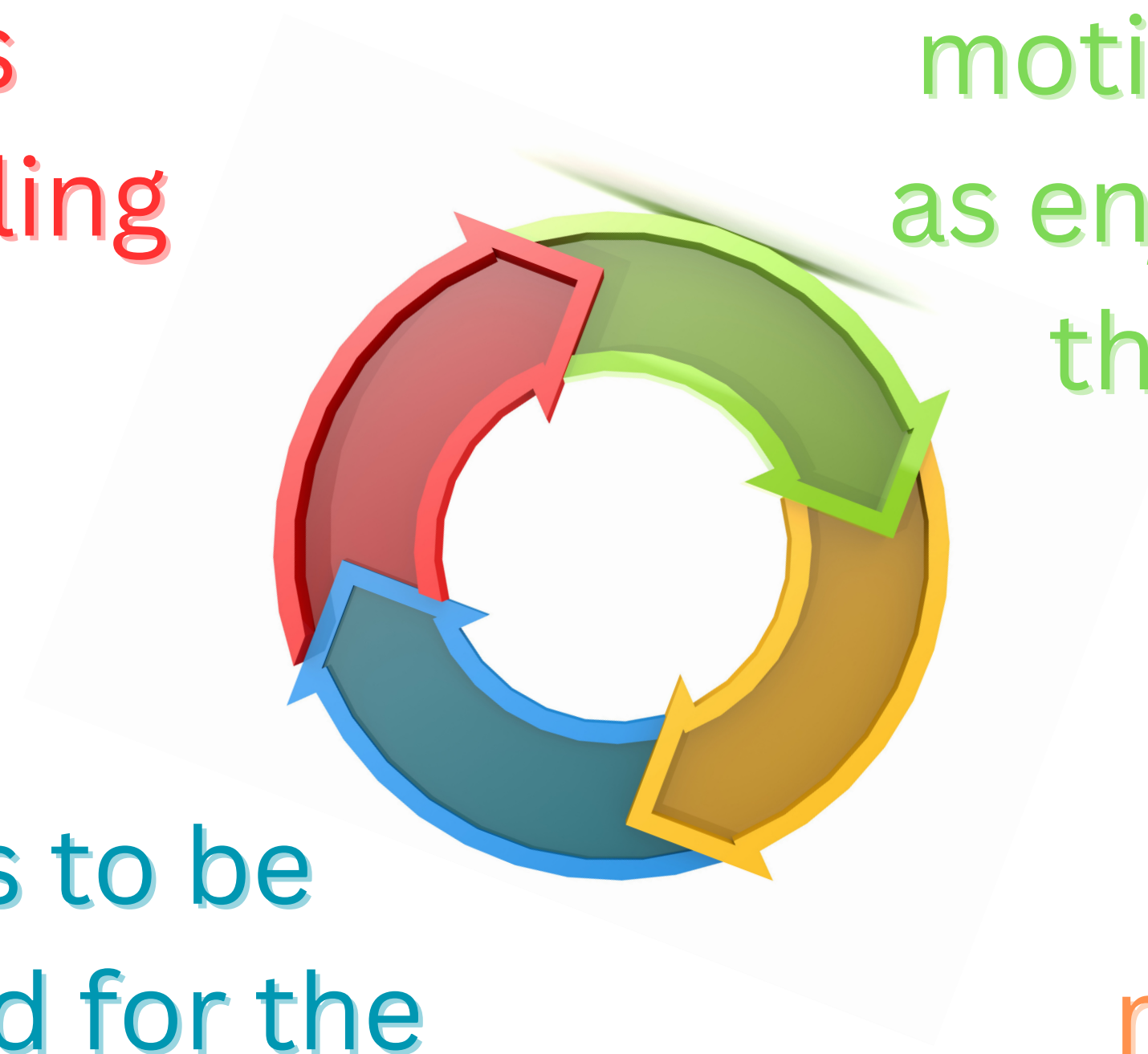
Moreover, students who are learning English as a second language may face challenges with reading due to a language barrier. These students may struggle with complex vocabulary and sentence structures. Additional support, such as English language instruction and bilingual books, can help them advance their reading skills.

In conclusion, there are various causes of reading struggles, and it's essential for parents to recognize them. By identifying the root cause of a student's reading difficulties and providing them with appropriate support and accommodations, we can help all students become successful readers.

The Cycle of Positive Influence

1. Students take part in an activity such as reading/ story telling

2. If this experience was a positive one, then they may be motivated through factors such as enjoyment or connection with the other person involved.



4. This then needs to be positively reinforced for the cycle to continue and for the student to remain positive.

3. Students are then more likely to develop positive attitudes towards reading

Reading is a powerful tool that can enhance our knowledge and vocabulary, while also influencing our thoughts and emotions in a positive way. When we read inspiring books or moving stories, we tend to adopt positive attitudes and behaviours.

But there's more to it than that. Reading can create a cycle of positivity that's hard to ignore. Books expose us to new perspectives and experiences, making us more empathetic and understanding towards others. This heightened empathy can inspire us to make positive changes in our own lives and even our communities.

In addition to fostering empathy, reading can also provide relaxation and stress relief. So grab a book and reap the many benefits that come with this pleasurable activity.

How can you support your child's reading at home?



Share your experiences

Sharing your experiences about why reading is important for life and work, whilst being mindful not to add any negative feelings can help children to see that everyone struggles with certain things but it's worth persevering.

Don't make it a chore

Avoid reading being seen as a chore though requests such as 'if you read for fifteen minutes, you can...' Whilst this may work for some young people, it is unlikely to lead to reading being seen as an enjoyable activity.

Take an interest

Take an interest in what they're reading and studying at school by reading around topics as well so that you can engage in discussion about their texts/areas of interest of learning, whilst modelling an interest in reading.

Give lots of praise

Help your child to experience feeling successful with reading. Praise and encourage them, whilst showing interest in what they've read.

**“By sharing books, we
can help our teens find
their way in this this
crazy mixed-up world.”
SARAH MACKENZIE**



Make time

Research by the National Literacy Trust showed that reading for pleasure increased during lockdown; one of the reasons young people gave for this was having time to read and fewer distractions. This would suggest that helping your child to balance their time and factor reading into their schedule in a quiet environment would be beneficial.

Explore

Help your child to be proactive in their wide reading. For example, if they are covering WWII, explore age appropriate texts on this through poetry, online articles or novels.

Pick texts for pleasure, not just school

Support your child with selecting age-appropriate texts for them to read for pleasure, rather than only encouraging them to read for school work.

Read with them

Often younger children enjoy reading with their parents and interest wanes when it becomes an independent activity and they no longer share a connection with someone over a book. Read with them or listen to audiobooks if you don't feel confident to read for yourself.

FINDING TEXTS FOR YOUR CHILD

Children who struggle with reading may have difficulty accessing texts that would pique their interest and explore age-appropriate issues. The National Literacy Trust conducted research that revealed an increased interest in reading during lockdown, leading to a broader selection of quality reading material. Therefore, it's crucial to encourage students to discover a variety of reading materials to find the ones that capture their interest. This could include non-fiction articles from magazines, newspapers or websites, novels, plays or blog posts, and so on. What they read isn't necessarily important; the goal is to encourage a love of reading in any form. Recent research suggests that audiobooks may also be useful for increasing interest in reading as well as modelling good reading fluency, so consider exploring this option if your child is hesitant to read.

Tips on how to choose reading materials for your child:

- Keep in mind that the goal is to help your child enjoy reading and discover texts that interest them, regardless of the content.
- Encourage them to explore different mediums, including books, graphic novels, online articles, websites, or magazines.
- Introduce fiction books that relate to their interests, or suggest reading about the topic online.
- If they enjoyed a book by a particular author, encourage them to try another book by the same author.
- Spend quality time with your child browsing library shelves, reading blurbs, and speaking with staff or reading book reviews online.
- Consider your child's reading level to ensure that they can comprehend the vocabulary in the text. It may be helpful to speak with their teacher or listen to them read aloud before selecting materials.



THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING TO TEXTS

The Benefits of Reading Aloud with Your Children

Sharing stories with your family can be a delightful experience for everyone involved. However, many parents stop reading aloud to their children once they learn how to read on their own.

Unfortunately, this can cause children to miss out on the joy of sharing a story and the sense of connection that comes with it.

This may also discourage children from reading as they grow older.

When parents read aloud to their children, they expose them to more complex vocabulary and concepts than what they may be reading on their own. This allows children to experience more intriguing stories that may not be written at their reading level. Reading together also provides a break from the daily routine and creates a magical connection that can lead to meaningful conversations and inside jokes.

Here are a few ways to introduce reading aloud into your home:

- Integrate it into your daily routine. During dinner, you could mention a topic you've been reading about and ask for your child's opinion. Read short articles about current events to older children who have not been read to in a while.
- Listen to an audiobook while driving to school or running errands. This is an excellent option for families with busy schedules, long commutes, or parents who are not confident in their reading skills.
- Suggest reading a novel aloud or listening to an audiobook as a family after dinner. Children can draw, paint, make models, or help with the dishes while you read together.

“Reading to our kids teaches them to think, make connections, and communicate. Reading aloud doesn’t just open windows. It flings wide the doors of opportunities.”

Sarah Mackenzie



QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILST READING WITH YOUR CHILD

You could use the prompts below to help you start a discussion about an extract or whole text. You could read the text with your child (either one of you reading, or taking it in turns) or you could read the text independently from each other and use these prompts to start a discussion afterwards.

BEFORE YOU READ

PREDICT

Make predictions before you read something together. This could be based on what will happen next in the story, what an article could be based on the headline, or what clues the book cover can give us about the narrative.

- What do you think the cover suggests about the story?
- What do you think will happen next in the story?
- What does the headline suggest the article might be about?
- What do you think you will learn/find out?

DISCUSS RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES

Discussing any knowledge or experience they have about a topic may help them to understand a text better or to make connections. For example, if you are reading a text about dinosaurs, you could ask what they can recall about dinosaurs, it can be even about Jurassic Park!

- What do you already know about...?
- Do you remember the time we read/watched/visited...?

DURING OR AFTER YOUR READING

CHECK UNDERSTANDING REGULARLY

As you read, you will come across words and information they may not fully understand. Make sure you pause and check your child's understanding, thoughts or ideas about something they've read regularly to ensure that they definitely understand what they are reading.

- What do you think....means?
- If neither of us know what it means, how could we find out?
- What do you think the writer is suggesting here?
- Which pieces of information do you think are the most important and why?
- Is the writer saying...or...? Why do you think that?

ASK QUESTIONS TO THINK MORE DEEPLY

Discuss why the writer has chosen to represent characters, events, settings in a certain way- don't worry if you do not have all the answers! The important thing is to have a discussion with your child and encourage them to think about what they've read more deeply.

Praise your child and encourage their discussion, ideas and thinking.

'I wonder....' questions can work well here as they leave discussion more open

- I find your thinking behind that idea really interesting. Why do you think that?
- I wonder why the writer has chosen to use the word...? What does it make you think of/feel?
- Why do you think the writer presented the character setting like this?
- What is the purpose of the article/speech? How can you tell?
- Why might...be important?
- How are... and...alike/different?

SUMMARISING IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The most important step of all, summarising the ideas and information they have read, provides an opportunity to check for any misunderstandings your child may have and to consolidate their learning. Try to summarise at appropriate points throughout the text. Don't wait until the end of the text or chapter when they may have forgotten something.

- What are the three most important pieces of information in the text?
- What is the most interesting thing you have learnt and why?
- Which five words are key to the text and why?
- Is the tone/topic the same at the beginning and the end?
- What have you learnt?
- Were your predictions accurate? Why/why not?

**REMEMBER TO
RESTART THE
SEQUENCE FOR THE
NEXT SECTION OF
TEXT.**



“When we read, we can be inspired to want to build a better world and a brighter future. So keep reading and change the world.”
Christopher Edge.

