

Parent Workshop 1: Listening to Your Child Read

Six Top Tips

1. **Let your child hold the book** and be in charge of turning the pages. This makes them feel as if they are really reading to you and not the other way round.
2. **Look through** the book before you start reading it. Talk together about the pictures and what is happening in them. Use the words and names that you think your child will find difficult when they start to read the book with you. If your child looks through the book and looks at the end of the story before they start to read it this is **NOT CHEATING**, this is doing exactly what they have been taught to do at school in reading sessions and they should be praised for doing this.

Examples of what you might say when looking at the book before you start.

“Oh look **Henry** has fallen off the **trampoline**.”

“That’s funny, they’ve put a dog in the **supermarket trolley**.”

“**Beaky**, the parrot has flown into the **pirates’ cannon**.” I wonder what will happen next.”

3. If your child gets stuck on a word, don’t jump in too soon to tell them. Try different ways of getting the child to work out what the word might be. These are called **strategies** and there are four main ones.
 - Talk about what is happening in the picture; this might give them a clue and help them make a good guess at the word (Picture).
 - Sound out the word, this doesn’t work for some words of course was/all/some etc (Phonic).
 - Read to the end of the sentence then go back and see what word might make sense (Meaning).
 - Does the word look like and rhyme with a word your child already knows, for instance **all** rhymes with **fall** (Analogy)

Your child should be encouraged to try a mixture of all these strategies when they get stuck on a word. Do not hurry your child. If they practise using these clues (**strategies**) they will become quicker at using them when they come across an unknown word. Even adults use these clues to help us read words we don’t know sometimes.

4. After you have finished a book, **discuss** the story or the information in the book in the case of non-fiction. Ask your child what they thought about the ending - was it a good ending? What would they have done if they were one of the characters in the story? As your child becomes more confident begin to ask ‘why’ questions where the answers are not simply stated in the book. You might also ask your child to retell the story to check they have not just barked at the print. Talking about the book at the end helps your child, think more about what they have read and allows them to express their views about it.
5. **Keep it short**, 10/15 minutes is fine, it is always best to leave your child wanting more rather than tiring them and you out! Many children can only concentrate for a

few minutes at a time. This is quite normal; don't worry if they get fidgety after a few minutes.

6. Your child should enjoy reading with you. It should be **fun**. If the book is too difficult don't try and make the child read the book just read it to them. You could try taking it in turns to read a word, sentence or a page each. Your child should come away from the session feeling good about themselves and the experience of reading and eager to read with you again. Give specific praise to your child for trying to read a new word, especially if they have used all or one of the four strategies mentioned earlier. ... "Well done you worked that out by looking at the picture and using the sound it starts with to help" (or whatever strategy they used). Reading should never be a battle but a pleasure for both of you, if your child doesn't want to read to you try just reading to them or simply reading something your child is eager to know about from a magazine or a newspaper. Even leaving a series of messages for your child on post-it notes around the house like a mystery hunt is all still reading practice for your child. Remember it is important that your child sees adults in the house enjoying reading newspapers, magazines, books etc (it doesn't really matter what you read).

To sum up the **six top tips** are:

- **Let you child hold the book**
- **Look through it first and talk about pictures etc.**
- **Let you child use strategies when they come across a word they don't know (Meaning/Analogy/Pictures/Phonic)**
- **Discuss the book with your child after they have read it.**
- **Keep the session short**
- **Make it fun for both of you.**