



Literacy Matters - Advice for Parents
Ways to support your child and help
them succeed

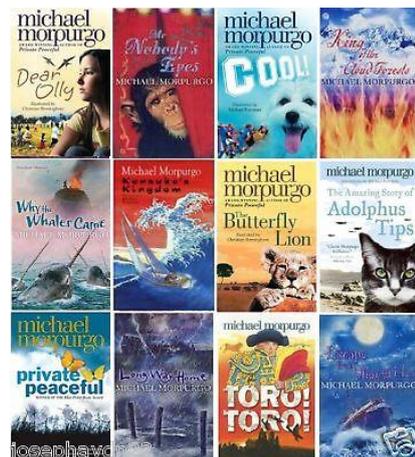
Hearing your child read

Here are some practical ideas to help you as you hear your child read. It is important that children find reading an enjoyable, challenging and interesting activity.

Try to sit in a quiet and comfortable place where there will be few distractions. If your child will need help decoding words, make sure that you can both see the text.

Talk about the book before they start to read to you.

- This looks interesting. What do you think it is going to be about?
- What made you choose the book?
- Are you enjoying it? Why?
- Is it part of a series?
- Is it by an author you particularly enjoy?
- What has happened so far?
- Do you like this type of story?



Listen to your child read. If they come across a word they are unfamiliar with, or get stuck on, try some of these ideas to help the:

- Point to a picture clue on the page if possible.
- Use a gesture to demonstrate what the word is.
- Ask a question that the word will answer.
- Re-read the sentence again. 'What word could fit in there?'
- Point to the initial letter and say the initial sound.
- Supply the word.

Try to begin with clues that encourage understanding the meaning of the word, rather than just its sound. Always encourage your child to make intelligent guesses.

Give as much praise as possible when a word is worked out correctly. You are aiming to build confidence of your child as a reader. So try not to dwell on mistakes. If it is necessary to supply the word, then do so. It is good practice for children to hear you read, so feel free to read parts of the book to your child - you will be providing a model for them to follow as a reader and it will also help your child get the flow of the story.

Give positive feedback on all other aspects of reading as often as possible, without interfering with the flow of the reading.

- Well done! You worked that word out well.
- Well done! You knew your first try wasn't quite right.
- That sounded so good. Well done!

It is most important to respond to the content of what is being read. If it is funny- laugh; if it's sad- say how moving you found their reading; if it's information- discuss it, preferably giving your child an opportunity to tell you more from his / her knowledge.

Your child should be trying to understand and think more about what they have read. Always encourage their answers and give you own ideas too.

- How does the character feel?
- Why do they feel like this?
- How do you know that the character feels like this? (Can they find evidence in the text)

- How would you feel in and react to that situation?
- What would you do next? Why?
- Do you think the characters will do the same?

Questions can be asked on moral and social issues.

- Should they ever have done that?
- Would it ever be right to do that?
- When was the story set? In the past / future?
- Would we behave in that way nowadays? Why / why not?

Questions can be asked about the language of the text.

- Would your Grandma talk in that way?
- Does the conversation sound realistic?

Other aspects that can be thought about are:

- Can you picture the setting of this story in your mind?
- What is it like?
- What other stories does it remind you of?
- Do you think that there is a message that the author is trying to say to us through the story?
- Can you predict what may happen next?

The ending of the story can also be discussed.

Does the story end as you were expecting it to?

Would you have ended it that way? Why / why not?

Talk about what you have heard your child read. Express an interest in knowing how the story ends. Always finish on a positive note.

Thank you reading to me! I really enjoyed the part about ...

I look forward to hearing how it ends!

Fun ideas to encourage good reading habits

- Join the local library and visit regularly
- Show your child how much you enjoy reading and let them see you use a dictionary
- Talk about words that are the same but have different meanings (jam goes well on your toast, as well as meaning cars stuck in traffic)
- Give your child time (10 seconds) to take sound out words they don't recognise straight away.
- Take turns to read aloud and be an enthusiastic listener when your child reads aloud to you.
- Take a book everywhere you go and make up stories as you travel, with each of you adding a new line.

Writing

- Encourage your child to write in 'real' circumstances as much as possible.
- Reading their work aloud can help a child ensure it makes sense.
- Help your child check for full stops and capital letters.
- Encourage them to expand their vocabulary by thinking of alternative words- make it a game, played little and often, e.g. How many words can you think of that mean 'happy' or 'exciting'?
- Make sure your child has a dictionary and thesaurus and encourage them to use it when writing.
- When the writing is finished, ask questions. Has it achieved its purpose? How could we make it better?
- Show your child examples of written documents, e.g. letters and newspapers and draw their attention to the different layout conventions.



