

Top tips for sharing books with your child

Everyone can join in the fun sharing books!

Why not try these top tips?



- ❖ Sit close together when sharing a book and encourage your child to hold the book themselves and/or turn the pages
- ❖ Turn off the television or anything that will distract you
- ❖ Don't be afraid to use funny voices – it's a great way to make your child giggle. And don't be afraid to sing either – they won't care whether or not you sing in tune or know the words!
- ❖ When you talk to your child about what's going on in a book, give them plenty of time to respond. Try to ask questions that don't require just yes or no answers. For example, ask them what they think will happen next ask or about how a character might be feeling
- ❖ Sharing books isn't just about the words - point to the pictures and relate them to something your child knows
- ❖ Using a puppet to act out a story can help your child to understand what's going on and learn how to pretend play. Why not pick a character from your book and use the puppet to show what they are doing? Watch the video below for more guidance.
- ❖ And lastly – make it fun! It doesn't matter how you read with a child, as long as you both enjoy the time together!

Look on www.bookstart.org.uk for a wealth of information.

Expert advice about sharing stories

Don't be nervous about reading aloud

It's just you and your child. There's no one to judge or point out wrong words or missed pages – although if it's a book you've read before, your child might tell you! Children love spending time with the grown-ups in their lives. They are not critical or judgemental; they just appreciate sharing that time and experience.



The importance for your child

Babies love the sound and rhythm of our voices. They might not understand the words, but they like how our voices naturally go up and down. They babble back and eventually learn to say words – all because we talk to them.

Stories help children learn about the world and themselves, but also about language and how stories and books work. For instance, they learn what a 'page' is because we say 'Shall we turn the page?' etc.

When we talk to children about the pictures in books, we're giving them the chance to ask questions and make connections with the world. Sharing books is not about 'teaching them to read' – it's about discovering that books are exciting and fun. It feeds their imagination (and interests) so that when the time comes to learn, they are eager to read stories for themselves.

Keeping your child interested in books

- ❖ The secret is to choose books that support your child's interests, as well as being fun and interactive.
- ❖ If your child likes tractors or crocodiles, then choose books with tractors or crocodiles in them.
- ❖ You don't have to talk about everything on every page – choose the pages they will be interested in.



- ❖ Don't worry about reading the words – tell the story from the pictures and talk together about what you see. If a picture reminds them of something they have seen or experienced, then let them talk about it.
- ❖ If it takes you all day to read a book because you do it a couple of pages at a time in between all the other things your child wants to do – that's fine, because there's no rush.
- ❖ If your child really isn't enjoying the book, leave it – you don't have to finish, just find one they do enjoy.

Reading the same book again and again

As adults we tend to read the same paper each day or watch the same TV programme each week – we choose to go back to something that we enjoy.

If your child has a favourite book – it's because they enjoy it and they want it 'again, again'. It could be that the cat in the book looks like granny's, that your funny voices make them laugh, or perhaps it's the kiss or tickle they get on page 4. These favourite stories are helping them learn that books are fun and that reading is something they want to do.

If your child doesn't have a favourite story, don't panic – continue to share lots of different types of books with them because this is what they enjoy!

Choosing appropriate books and stories

- ❖ For babies and very young children, choose a book with good pictures that you can talk about for a few minutes. Board books and flap books are also brilliant for very young children who often want to eat their books as well as look at them. Children love the anticipation of what's hidden beneath the flap. Talk about what you see on the page and don't worry about reading the words at this stage.
- ❖ For older children, you will have to consider what sort of books your child likes – do they like books with animals in, or trains or a particular book/television character?
- ❖ Always encourage your child to choose books for themselves – take them to your local library where there are hundreds of children's books.
- ❖ Remember every time you share a book with a child you are doing something really valuable – helping them to discover the pleasure of reading.

