



Ideas for shared reading with your children

Reading is a complex task and requires a number of skills. A child that simply learns to 'decode' words can often misinterpret many other elements that make up 'reading', particularly fiction. Children learn to read and decipher print very early on. For example: How many young children do you know that cannot read the words; 'Burger King' or 'CBeebies'? However, reading a children's story for example requires an understanding of many other elements, such as character expression, intonation, inference, subplots, hidden meanings, subtle jokes etc. The more that a child experiences these elements and patterns in stories when modelled by an adult telling a story, the richer their understanding will be.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of not rushing or putting pressure on your child to try to read too early. By all means explore text and have fun with looking at words in print, but remember that your child will be having a 'reading book' for the whole of their school life! If you get too absorbed by simply reading one basic story after another, your child will soon lose interest and may also lose confidence if they haven't fully learnt the other skills required.

Below are a few ideas that you can try when you are sharing a book with your child. Please don't do all of them at the same time! They are intended as prompts to use and develop as you explore:



- Find a quiet place to share a book together (let your child turn the pages).
- Read through and re-read the story (adult).
- Ask your child to predict what might happen next (first time reading)
- Let your child re-tell the story to you (at their level), if they lose interest, stop and come back to it another time.
- Try telling the story without the book.
- Try asking your child to read some words independently.
- Ask your child what they know about the book.
- Ask key questions about the main characters. Think of words to describe them.
- Discuss other characters in the story.
- Ask what your child might do if they were a character in the story. What might they say?
- Ask your child what they like best about the story.

- Talk about your own thoughts about the story; is there something you don't like? What might you change? Ask your child what they might change.
- If you were the Author and you wanted to try a different idea, what would you do differently? Would you change a character? Perhaps you might change the ending?
- Try finding out about other stories by the same Author (visit the Library)
- Try finding out about elements in the story from other resources (e.g.) if the story has animals; can you look on the internet for pictures?
- Ask your child to draw pictures of the characters in the story, or make up their own characters.
- Help your child to write (or adult scribe) words to describe the character (e.g.) two large, pointy ears, two round staring eyes etc.
- Role-play elements of the story by creating props and costumes to help when re-enacting.
- Make up your own story together. Have fun inventing settings for the story and enjoy naming and describing different characters (good and bad).
- When making up a story think about the different elements or ingredients (e.g.) openings, scary moments, funny incidents, sudden or dramatic occurrences, happy or sad endings etc.
- Tell and retell the made up stories and share them with family and friends.
- Create your own books, paying attention to Authors, Illustrators and Titles as well as the 'blurb' at the back which you could ask your child to explain.

I hope that this has helped. If you have any other suggestions or would like to speak more about this, please let me know.

Have fun!

Mr. Pote