



Supporting a Reluctant Reader: Top Tips to get Kids Reading

- 1) Start with what they're interested in – dinosaurs / Star Wars / Disney princesses...
- 2) Concentrate on one phonics sound at a time – encourage them to read just those words whilst you read the rest of the story to hold their interest.
- 3) Less is more when practising the mechanics of reading; it's hard, tiring work so 10-15 min's is great to start with. You can gradually increase the time and number of words they read as they become more competent and confident.
- 4) Praise your child whenever s/he is trying to read, even if mistakes are being made. (Praise the effort, not the outcome; otherwise s/he may worry more about making mistakes and not risk trying in the first place!)
- 5) Practise writing / spelling the key words your child has been reading on an Etch-a-Sketch or mini whiteboard, so they can easily erase mistakes.
- 6) Use every day experiences to support your child's interest in language. Encourage them to describe things they find in the garden / on a walk / in the toy box. Broadening children's vocabulary through talk supports their recognition of the words they will come to read.
- 7) Help your child to see the point in reading – make it purposeful and useful to them directly if you can e.g. read a recipe together to bake a simple cake / follow a set of basic instructions to put up a tent to make a den for them / research a topic they are passionate about.
- 8) Reading isn't just about recognising and using words. It also includes the ability to decode a variety of information, interpret and make meanings. So encourage your child to read in lots of different ways, such as reading images in Lego instructions to make a model or predicting what's going to happen next in a film. If s/he is great at reading in any of these ways, praise this specifically to build confidence and self-esteem around reading. When kids believe they are good at something, they want to do more of it (the opposite is also true, so focus on what they *can* do).
- 9) Kids don't always do as we say; they do what we do. If your child looks up to someone in your household, encourage that person to read regularly and visibly so that the child sees a role model reading. This is especially important for boys as they move towards the end of Key Stage 2 and prepare for secondary education. Model reading a variety of different texts such as books, newspapers, magazines, instructions, online content, etc. – make reading a normal part of everyday life.
- 10) End every day with a positive experience of reading. Snuggle up with a story together. Young children will benefit from the closeness and comfort of you reading to them. Don't expect them to read to you at bedtime – the purpose of this reading experience is to calm the brain ready for sleep, rather than stimulate it with academic challenge.