

HELPING YOUR CHILD READ AT HOME

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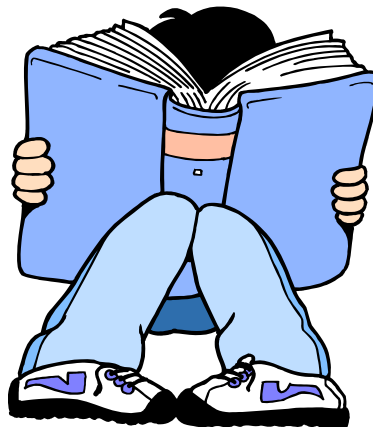
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INTRODUCTION

At Maulden school we appreciate and value your support as parents in helping children learn to read.

In this booklet we aim to offer some practical ideas and advice about how children learn to read, and the skills they need to develop as their reading progresses.



READING AT HOME

4-5 YEARS OLD

READING TO YOUR CHILD

Perhaps one of the most valuable things you can do to help your child become a confident reader is to read to them as often as possible, allowing them the opportunity to join in and talk about the stories or information as they look and listen. This will increase their vocabulary, develop essential listening skills and help them to become familiar with how 'book language' is different from spoken language.



PHONICS

Phonemic awareness is one of the first and most important skills that young readers need to learn. First, children must learn the sounds made by single letters of the alphabet. They can then use this knowledge to help them 'sound out' or decode combinations of letters to read simple words.

You can help develop your child's phonemic awareness by:

- Playing games like I Spy
- Reading nursery rhymes and poems
- Singing songs
- Reading stories that include lots of repetition, rhythm and rhyme

PICTURE CLUES

As children learn to read on their own, the pictures in a book provide vital clues for reading the words. For example, a young child might not be able to decode the word 'bear' but will almost certainly recognise a picture of a big, brown, hairy beast that lives in a forest.

The pictures also show the child what's happening in the story and what might happen next. This builds their contextual knowledge of the story and helps them predict other unknown words.

You can help develop your child's awareness of picture clues by:

- Making links between spoken words and objects, actions or pictures at an early age
- Reading books with clear illustrations that give clues about the words
- Talking about what is happening in the pictures



SIGHT WORD RECOGNITION

Sight words are also known as 'Key Words' or 'High Frequency Words'. We have provided a list of these words at the back of the booklet. (The national expectation is that children should be able to read and spell all these words by the end of Year 2.)

High Frequency Words could be described as the building blocks of the English language, in that they are the essential words that children need to know in order to read the very simplest of books. Sometimes these words cannot be decoded and therefore need to be learnt in a more formal way so they can be recognised by sight.

You can help develop your child's knowledge of sight words by:

- Practising flashcards sent home from school
- Playing matching games such as Snap, Pairs or Bingo using High Frequency Words
- Using magnetic letters to make sight words

PLAYING WORD GAMES

Playing word-matching games like Bingo, Snap or Odd One Out, are a fun way of helping your child to recognise common words and letter patterns.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Play word matching games with a selection of Sight Words; e.g. my, the, and, she, it, in, is, on, up, down, etc...
- Play word-matching games with simple rhyming words; e.g. cat, bat, hat, hen, pen, men, pig, big, wig, etc...
- Play word-matching games with words that have the same first or last letter; e.g. sat, sea, sand, sun, or hen, sun, down, fan, etc...
- Play games that match simple words and pictures; e.g. cat, house, swing, ball, etc...



READING AT SCHOOL

At school we teach and practice reading skills in a number of ways:

- **Guided Reading** - children read with the teacher or other adult in small groups according to ability
- **Shared Reading** - children read a big book as a whole class
- **Individual Reading** - children read on their own to the teacher or another adult
- **Independent Reading** - children read books to themselves

A Reading Scheme is a collection of lots of books that are graded to support children's gradual learning. These books are often specially written to teach/practise particular words or reading skills. The careful structure of most schemes encourages children's progress towards reading independence. At Maulden School, we use a range of scheme books, which are colour banded according to National Curriculum reading levels.

READING HOMEWORK

Hearing your child read their school reading book at home is very important, as they need to frequently practise the skills they are being taught in class. If possible, set aside a quiet time every day for reading school books together.

If your child brings a reading book home, he/she might have read the book in school, or it might be a new book. Whatever the case, your child should be able to read most of the book on his/her own. Children will bring home a Reading Diary in their Book Bags for parents to keep a record of their home reading and make any comments. Please sign and date the diary every time you listen to your child read at home.

How you can help:

- Encourage your child to point to the words as he/she reads. This helps early readers to match the words they say to the words they see.
- If the book is a bit difficult, take turns reading a page each. This will help the flow of the reading, and you can begin to show your child how to read with expression.
- Talk about the book as you read it and after you finish it. Ask your child what he/she liked about the book or the bits they found tricky.
- Don't worry if the book seems too easy - all of us enjoy an easy read sometimes, and it can help your child consolidate skills.
- Don't cover up the pictures or the rest of the text when your child is reading. Parents often do this because they think it will help their child focus on the words he/she needs to read. In fact the pictures and the rest of the words on the page can give vital clues to help your child decode unknown words



KEY READING SKILLS

4 & 5 YEARS OLD

In the Foundation Stage, children will be exposed to a wider range of books and literacy experiences.

- Listening to and enjoying longer stories and rhymes
- Extending vocabulary and talking about what words mean
- Building knowledge of the alphabet, recognising both upper and lower case letters and knowing the sounds individual letters make
- Understanding what words are and that they have spaces between them
- Pointing to known and unfamiliar words in a book
- Understanding that we read print from left to right
- Understanding simple book terms such as page, title, word, cover, illustration, text, author, beginning and end
- Talking about a story and beginning to predict what might happen
- Retelling a story, describing a clear sequence of events in the right order
- Beginning to read some words and sentences independently
- Writing simple, regular words including their own name
- Reading and spelling all Foundation Stage High Frequency Words correctly
- Recognising initial and final letter sounds in words - pointing to things that start or end with the same letter sound

READING AT HOME

6-7 YEARS OLD

READING TO YOUR CHILD

Reading to your child is still important. Even as young children grow in confidence as readers, it is important to continue reading to them. This helps children to understand the special language of stories, builds their vocabulary and supports their writing skills.

Try and read to your child every day. Read longer stories that they will love but won't be able to tackle on their own - make this a fun part of the daily routine!

Read information books as well as stories. Choose books about your child's interests or things that fascinate him/her.

Keep reading those old favourites! Reading a book that your child loves is really valuable, no matter how well you both know it or how often you've read it before. Reading favourite books again and again builds children's vocabulary and fosters that all-important love of reading.



CONTEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE

Contextual knowledge is important to all young readers.

Understanding the context of a book - *what it is about, where it is set, who the characters are, what's happening...* - can help young readers to predict words they don't know.

Using this contextual knowledge, children can make an educated guess about which word makes sense. They may also use other strategies, such as looking at the pictures, to help them.

You can help your child use this strategy by:

- Talking about the book as you read it
- Encouraging your child to make an educated guess
- Praising your child's efforts, even if they are slightly wrong

GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE

The rules that govern the English language are called grammar. Grammar tells us what kinds of words to use and how to put them together to make a sentence.

As children become more able readers, they begin to use their understanding of sentence structure to help them predict unknown words. Using grammatical knowledge, children can make an educated guess about which word might come next. They may also use other strategies, such as looking at the first letter of the word, to help them.

You can help your child use this strategy by:

- Encouraging your child to read the sentence aloud
- Encouraging your child to make an educated guess
- Praising your child's efforts, even if they are slightly wrong



COMPREHENSION

Comprehension quite simply means understanding what you are reading! This sounds like an obvious skill, but it doesn't happen automatically. It is something that needs to be taught and encouraged as children learn to read. Many young readers concentrate so much on the words they are reading that they don't stop to think about what the words are telling them. These children decode words well and can appear to be very fluent readers. However, they often have no sense of what they have been reading about. Good readers don't just read the words - they think about the meaning of a text, ask themselves questions, and form personal opinions about what they have read.

You can help your child develop their comprehension skills by:

- Asking your child to locate key facts in a book - *when, where, who, what...*
- Talking about a book (including the pictures) as you read it
- Asking questions about why or how things happened
- Asking your child to say what they thought of a book... and why

READING HOMEWORK

Take a lively interest in your child's reading and the books he/she brings home. If possible, set aside a quiet time each day for reading school reading books together. Some children will begin to read silently at this age - this should be encouraged, so try to make sure they have some quiet time for reading on their own.

How you can help:

- Encourage your child to read without pointing to the words. If they get stuck, they can use pointing to help them focus on a particular word.
- Encourage your child to read aloud with lots of expression - this will help him/her to see the purpose of punctuation. Reading stories, plays or poems aloud also helps children to understand how a writer makes things come alive, and how words can make the reader feel different things.
- Talk about the book as you read it, and after you've finished. Ask your child to explain why and how things happened in the book.
- Discourage your child from rushing through their books just to get to the next level of the reading scheme. Learning to read isn't a race or a competition with other children in the class.



READING FOR A PURPOSE

Reading something for a reason helps your child see that reading is not only entertaining, but is also an important and useful skill for life. Very few adults actually read fiction, but how often do we use reading to find something out, do something, make something or get somewhere?

Here are some ideas of how you and your child can read for a purpose:

- Follow a recipe, read a film review, find something in a catalogue, or make something by following instructions.
- Use information books and encyclopaedias to look things up or find things out
- Read notices and signs when you are out and about

TALKING ABOUT BOOKS

It's not just about reading! As children begin to tackle longer books, it is really important that they understand what they are reading, and begin to form and express opinions about the books they have read.

Here are some ways you can help:

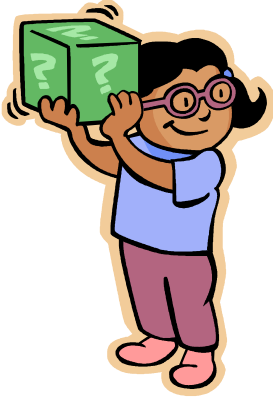
- Involve your child in choosing books in the library or bookshop. Encourage him/her to look at the back cover and find out what the book is about, and why he/she might like/dislike it.
- Talk about stories together and ask your child to tell you the story and to explain what happened and why. Encourage him/her to express their feelings about particular characters or events. It's important that your child discusses how the story made him/her feel, and whether he/she likes/dislikes it.
- Make connections between things that happened in the book and things which have happened to your child or people you know.
- Talk about information books and ask your child to tell you what he/she has learned, or what he/she wants to find out next. Encourage him/her to evaluate the book - was the information clear and easy to find?



KEY READING SKILLS

6 YEARS OLD	7 YEARS OLD
<p><i>Children are taught an increasing range of literacy skills and enjoy lots of different reading experiences - both fiction and non-fiction. They gradually begin to read independently.</i></p>	<p><i>Most children are now able to read simple books independently and are beginning to think and talk more critically about what they read. They generally enjoy reading and understand that reading has a range of different purposes.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising common combinations of letters and the sounds they make • Reading a range of common words on sight • Reading longer sentences with support • Looking at the first letter or the pictures to work out what new words are • Using the context of the book to help them guess new words • Beginning to read aloud with appropriate expression • Beginning to use the terms 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' • Recognising a sentence • Identifying simple punctuation marks - <i>full stops, capital letters and question marks</i> • Talking about stories, describing features of the story such as setting and characters • Beginning to talk about how and why things happen in stories • Linking events in stories to their own experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a range of different strategies to work out what new words are • Recognising a range of common, irregular words • Identifying a range of punctuation marks - <i>commas, exclamation marks, speech marks</i> • Reading familiar stories fluently and with understanding • Reading aloud with expression, paying attention to the punctuation • Talking in more detail about stories - <i>key events, story theme, characters and settings</i> • Expressing opinions about characters in stories • Recognising the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and understanding their different purposes • Using knowledge of alphabetical order to find information in dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other reference books • Recognising and using contents and index pages in information books

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



What should I do if my child is struggling to read a word?

It is important to give your child time to try and work out a word, but if she is really struggling, here are some things you can do to help:

- *Suggest that he/she looks at the first letter of the word and says the sound*
- *Suggest that he/she looks at the picture for clues*
- *Ask him/her to try breaking the word down into syllables or into other, smaller words*
- *Encourage him/her to read the rest of the sentence and ask if he/she can guess which word might fit the gap*
- *Always offer lots of encouragement and praise for effort*

If your child continues to struggle tell him/her what the word is, so that he/she can carry on reading.

My child doesn't enjoy reading - what can I do?

Not all children enjoy learning to read and this can be frustrating for both you and your child. Here are some things you could try:

- *Choose books or other materials about a subject or a character your child likes. Reading about something he/she is interested in will help motivate your child and add to the enjoyment*
- *Read for a purpose with your child. Read a recipe and make a cake, or read some instructions for playing a game or making a model. Make it fun!*
- *If your child really isn't enjoying reading, it is best to stop and try again later. Both of you need to be relaxed and happy.*

What can I do to make sure my child understands what he/she is reading?

Some children can read aloud quite well, but often don't understand what they are reading. Sometimes they don't notice when they make a mistake or when what they read doesn't make sense. Here are some things you can do:

- *Spend plenty of time discussing what a book might be about before your child starts reading*
- *Talk about the book as you read it together. Ask questions to make sure your child understands what is happening*
- *If your child makes a mistake, encourage him to say the sentence again and ask, "Does it make sense?"*

What's the best way to help my child with reading?

There are lots of things you can do, but here are some of the most important...

- *Make sure your child sees reading as an enjoyable activity that people do every day. Have lots of books, magazines and newspapers around at home and make sure your child sees YOU reading them*
- *If possible, read to or with your child every day. Try to set aside some quiet time when you don't want to be rushed or interrupted, and when you can both enjoy reading together*
- *Join the local library and visit it regularly. Encourage your child to choose his/her own books*
- *Offer praise and encouragement for achievement, but don't get it out of proportion. It's best to treat learning to read as a natural part of your child's development, not a life or death matter!*

What sort of books should I read with my child?

Every child is different and will enjoy different things, but here are some general recommendations:

- *Children enjoy picture books with rhyme, rhythm and repetition. They enjoy the sounds the words make, and like to join in with repeated phrases.*
- *Children often enjoy stories about their favourite TV characters. Sometimes there are comics or magazines to read too!*
- *Some children (particularly boys) are often turned off reading by stories, especially as they get older. Try choosing information books about your child's favourite subjects. They may need more help to read these books, but if they want to read them, they will!*
- *Reading for a real purpose is a great encouragement to some children. Involve your child in reading things with you, such as recipes, shopping lists, instructions...*
- *Don't forget that reading isn't just about books and magazines. There are signs, labels, posters, adverts and information all around us! Point these out to your child when you're out and about.*



IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT READING WITH YOUR CHILD, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK ANY OF THE TEACHERS AT SCHOOL.

Appendix 1

HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

Foundation Stage

I	a	is	in	it	at	am	up	on
can	and	cat	dog	big	mum	dad	get	yes
no	go	to	of	me	he	she	the	we
for	you	are	my	was	look	like	said	come
went	day	play	away	see	all	they	this	going

Year 1 & 2

Set 1

an	as	if	us	man	not	did	dig
has	but	him	his	got	had	ran	bed

Set 2

jump	just	then	them	help	much
must	from	back	next	than	that
will	with	off	old	be	by
do	or	so	call(ed)	ball	way

Set 3

been	saw	boy	her	too	out
one	how	now	took	tree	good
put	seen	love	last	very	want
new	pull	push	girl	came	many
any	over	your	more	once	have
down	here	live(ed)	time	some	home
made	make	take	name	door	about

Set 4

who	where	when	what	were	why
there	their	these	again	don't	can't
little	after	would	could	should	house
half	because	sister	first	brother	another
water	laugh	people	night	school	friend
does	goes	suddenly	use	until	walk
children	every	small	asked	are	our

Also

- Days of the week
- Months of the year
- Colours
- Numbers to 20



Written by: Lisa Maxted & Teresa Fancourt

