



The School Of Education.

Finding ways to enjoy reading with your child: A guide for parents

Reading with your child is very valuable. Not only does it teach your child useful literacy and language skills, it also provides an opportunity to enjoy being close to your child and to develop your relationship. But for various reasons, it can be hard to get into the habit of reading. It can be especially hard if your child doesn't seem to want to read. This leaflet, based on research findings, provides some tips and suggestions to help you find ways to overcome some of these difficulties and enjoy reading with your child.

1. Shared reading needs to be enjoyable for you and your child. It is very important that you find books that YOU will enjoy reading with your child. The more you enjoy the activity, the more your child will too.
2. Building time for reading into a daily routine is often helpful. Small children love routines – they like the security and stability they provide. But find a routine that works for you and your family.
3. Reading at bedtime is lovely – it is a chance to spend some quiet, settling time with your child before they go to sleep. But this does not work for everyone. If bedtime reading does not work for your family, then try reading at different times. This could be in the morning, straight after school/nursery, after tea, in the bath.... See what works for you and your child.
4. While it is important for you to enjoy the reading experience, allow your child to choose the books you will read together. This is especially important if your child is reluctant to read with you. Perhaps the nursery/school has a library where s/he can choose books to take home? Charity shops often have a good selection of books that are not expensive.
5. You do not have to read every word in the book! It is fine to move away from the printed text and add your own words. Talk about the book and ask your child questions as you along. Perhaps insert your child's name into the story or say something funny! This will help to keep your child's attention.
6. Find ways of making the activity interesting and fun for both you and your child. You can try putting on different voices for different characters or get your child to join in if there is a repeated line in the book.
7. If you are trying to read to your child and s/he is obviously not enjoying it, then just stop. Try not to show frustration or anger – it is important that reading doesn't become a 'chore' or cause an argument. Show your child that you have listened to them.
8. Sometimes older children can associate reading with 'school' and 'work', and this might put them off reading at home. If this is the case, make home reading into a different experience from school. For example, you could try building a 'reading den' with sheets, torches and toys. Or try reading in a different place such as the garden or read to them while they are in the bath.
9. Remember – shared reading doesn't have to be about story books. Your child might enjoy reading a non-fiction book, a magazine, or something on a tablet.
10. If you have several children of different ages, find ways of involving everyone. Sometimes it can be nice for older siblings to read to younger ones. Try and make sure that everyone has time to read with you though. This might mean that it is not possible to read with every child every day and that's fine.

Make shared reading work for you, your child and your family. Read in ways that you are comfortable with and don't be afraid to do your 'own thing'. Above all – enjoy it!