

READING AT HOME

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Government of South Australia
Department for Education

READING WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Reading has always been an important skill - today it's more important than ever. You can create a rich literacy environment at home by reading with your child.

Children develop literacy through shared reading experiences, as well as reading instruction. Both of these things are important for children to become fluent readers.

This fact sheet explains what you can do at home to support children who are learning to read.

Support from schools

Don't feel like you need to take the place of your child's teacher. They will support you with books and resources to help your child practise reading at home. These will be matched to the letters, sounds and words that your child has been taught.

How to support your child's reading at home

Reading to your child will help them with their learning before and when they start school. If your child has started reading, you can listen to them read, or read together with them. These are great ways to create routine and comforting contact with family. It's also lots of fun.

For young children, being read to or watching you read and write helps them:

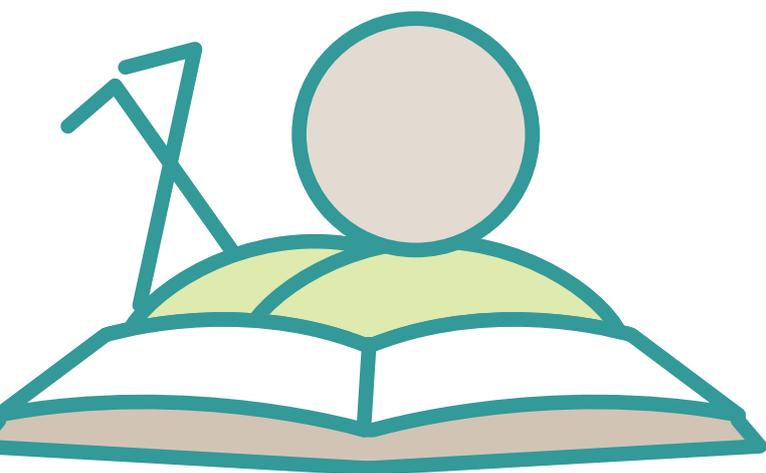
- understand how language works
- understand why reading is important
- develop early skills toward reading.

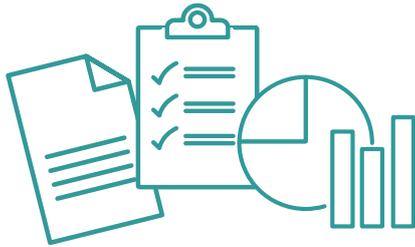
Children who are just beginning to read

With children who are just beginning to learn to read, you can focus on explaining:

- how we hold the book
- that the print is the part of the book we read
- reading the text from left to right
- that sentences are made up of words and punctuation.

Involve your child in everyday conversations and activities that include reading. For example, sharing a story, using a recipe, making a shopping list or reading street signs. These activities will help your child understand how reading and writing are used for lots of different everyday purposes and that we read other texts as well as books.





Children who know how print works

If your child knows how print works, you can focus on specific features of the book, like:

- headings and sub headings
- captions
- lists
- understanding diagrams or graphs
- text size and shape.

Reading out loud is important

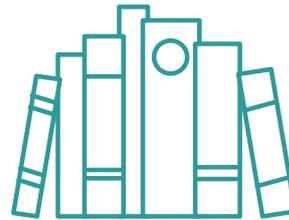
Reading to your child is a wonderful way to support their literacy development by:

- exposing them to new vocabulary
- building their knowledge of various subjects
- delving into topics that interest them.

It will also familiarise them with the sounds, shapes and processes of reading and writing. It can also be fun – like performance art!

If you're reading a familiar story, your child can join in, complete rhymes, or tap along to a beat. Don't worry about reading the same story more than once. Children love to hear stories over and over again.

Sharing songs and rhymes provides another opportunity for them to listen to and reproduce the sounds in our language.



Finding and choosing something to read

Make sure there's a wide range of reading material for your child at home – fiction and non-fiction books. School and second hand shops can be great places to find books. You could also swap books with other families.

Try to choose books together with your child. Talking about books will help them feel comfortable and familiar.

A new book can be a great treat or present.

Reading in your home language

If your home language isn't English, it's important to read to your child in your home language. Experience shows that using your home language will help your child learn to read in English.

Make time for reading every day

Make reading together a special time away from interruptions like television or phones. Your child will value the time spent together. It's also an excellent way to take a break from screen time.

If your child is tired or restless, keep the session short – approximately 5 minutes. When they are feeling up to it, you can extend the time. 5 to 10 minutes every day is better than one 20 minute session a week.



Reading together with your child

Use the books from your child's teacher

When practising reading at home, use the books provided by your child's teacher. The book will be matched to the letters, sounds and words that they have taught your child

Talk about what you're reading

As you and your child are reading, talk about what has happened so far and ask them what they think might happen next.

When you've finished the book, talk and ask questions about the story and the pictures.

Take turns reading harder books together

When reading a harder book together, take turns. The learning reader can read the simpler or repetitive parts. The experienced reader can read a paragraph or a page.

When you find a new word, pause to give your child time to work out the word. Don't let them guess the word. If it is a word your child hasn't heard before, say it out loud and ask them to repeat it to you. This way, you can check their pronunciation of the word.

Things to keep in mind when reading together

Support your child to:

- sound out the whole word using letter sounds (don't guess the word)
- blend the sounds in the word together (for example h-o-p hop, sh-e-ll shell, ch-i-ck-e-n chicken)
- repeat the word
- reread the sentence to maintain the meaning of the text
- explain the meaning of the word – some words have more than one meaning
- praise your child for trying, mistakes are part of learning.

With children who are learning to read, use letter tiles to pull out words from the story you are reading. Have your child build the word and read it back to you. Build up to short sentences.

Your child needs to feel successful when learning to read. Give them lots of praise and encouragement. By providing our children with lots of opportunities to practice we can help them feel confident, not anxious.



Reading is everywhere

You can find teachable moments everywhere throughout your day.

Some ways you can include reading in your everyday activities are:

- playing games such as 'I spy...something beginning with d'
- asking your child to read out simple recipes when you cook together
- doing word puzzles or crosswords together
- reading everyday materials like letterbox leaflets, brochures, labels, magazines and street signs together
- playing board games together, read the rules or the board
- asking your child to retell information you've read to them
- providing plastic letters, crayons, pencils, pens and writing paper
- encouraging your child to hold pencils and crayons.

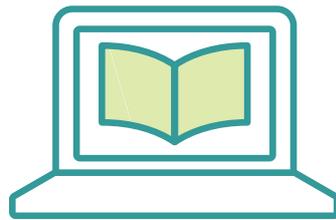


Make time for interaction with friends and family

Sharing stories orally and using new vocabulary helps children to build their confidence with language.

One way they can do this is by reading with friends and family over the phone, or through video chat.

This is a good chance for them to reread familiar books, and practice for fluency. Your child might enjoy performing the story, or reading it in funny voices.



Online reading resources

Our Learning SA website (ourlearning.sa.edu.au) has lots of resources you can use to support your child's literacy.

Some good places to start are:

- [the prior to school section](#)
- [the English area of the reception to year 2 section.](#)



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