

Helping with reading: ages 5 to 7



How to encourage your child to read

Read yourself! Set a good example by sharing your reading. Let your children see that you value books and keep them at home.

Keep books safe. Make your child their own special place to keep their books. Show them how to turn pages carefully.

Point out words all around you. Help your child to read the words around them: on food packets in the supermarket, on buses, in newspapers, in recipes.

Visit your library – it's free to join! All libraries have children's sections. Many also have regular storytelling sessions.

Make time to read. Read a bedtime story with your child every night. Encourage them to share reading with grandparents, brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles.

Keep in touch with school. Make sure your child swaps their home reading books regularly at school and try to make a regular time slot of about 10 minutes to hear them read.

If English is not your family's first language: You can buy dual language books. You can talk about books and stories in any language.

How to help with reading

Be positive. Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's all right to make mistakes.

Turn off the TV! It's easier for your child to concentrate if there are no distractions.

Give them time. Let them make a guess before you tell them the word. Help them to get the first sound or try breaking the word up into smaller sections.

Point with a finger. Encourage them to follow the words with their finger.

Don't make them try too hard! It doesn't matter if you have to tell them the word sometimes.

Let them read their favourites. It's good practice to read the same books over and over again.

Ask lots of questions. Check they understand the story by asking them questions about what happens. Use the pictures to explain what's happening.

Don't read for too long. A good ten minutes is better than a difficult half hour.

Activities to try at home

Organise a treasure hunt around the house on a rainy day. Give your child a list of things that they can find in the house and see how quickly they can collect all the items.

Create a monster dictionary by making up names of frightening monsters that begin with different letters of the alphabet. Ask your child to draw a picture of each one.