



Reading. Help!

2008 is National Year of Reading, its aim is 'to boost all children's love of reading' **and** please note, 're-engage adults with storytelling.'

The staff at Laleham Lea School believe that every year should be the National Year of Reading.

We believe that it is the most important academic thing you can do to help your child succeed and that the impact lasts a life time building their confidence and giving greater job opportunities.

Outlined below are many common questions, ideas and hopefully some sound advice culled from many different sources:

Isn't it the school's responsibility to teach my child to read?

The staff at our school believe that the importance of reading cannot be overstated. It is the key to opening the doors to virtually all other subjects and so much more.

However, parents are their child's first educator so parents and families have an important role to play. Indeed much research shows that your involvement in your child's reading and learning is more important than anything else in helping them to fulfil their potential. Encouraging your child to grow up loving reading is the best start you can give them. You can also have great fun in the process.

Above all you must enjoy reading?

All children at some time find reading difficult. As a parent do not make it more so, realise that they might not enjoy reading to you. This can be stressful for both you and your child and it can prevent your child from wanting to read at home.

So choose a time to suit both of you. Sit somewhere warm and comfy - a reading place! Reading regularly three times a week is enough to make a real difference.

Obviously you should choose good books i.e. ones that the children want to read. Decide with your child how long you want to read, 5-15 minutes is quite enough. You can spend time before reading talking about the blurb or pictures, author etc. Share the reading with your child and take turns reading each page - if they get tired or you wish to - read on. Help out with tricky words, encourage them to guess and check.

Above all do not be critical, no child makes mistakes on purpose - PRAISE ENCOURAGES and be specific why you are praising them.: "well done we had that hard word yesterday". With younger children, if there is time, let them reread the story and give them a chance to read more confidently. Remember reading aloud to an audience can be stressful and is a different skill to that of reading to yourself - be patient.

Reading is everywhere.

You can help your child with books sent home from school, but there are many other things you can read together as well and these are just as important (see 'Dad's Section): road signs, TV guides, shop signs, adverts, food packets, labels, how to information (car washes etc), instructions for DVD games etc.

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How to talk about books.

Why should your child read if you show no obvious interest in the written word? You probably read as part of your job, but you are encouraging your child to read books.

Does your child see you reading books? Do you practice what you preach?

Additionally talking about books helps children understand what they have read and makes reading more interesting...it can be as important as hearing your child read.

Before reading look at the cover, the author and the title, talk about what the book could be about.

During reading recap the story, propose reasons for what people have done or said.

Guess what will happen next.

After reading discuss whether it had a good ending. What did you both think of the book? What part did you like best? Why?

Remember this is not a test, but an equal discussion.

Is hearing your child read necessary?

Helping your child with reading at home helps them to make more progress at school.

Children love parents to take an interest in what they are doing.

How to read to your child.

Note this well – reading to your child is just as important as hearing your child read.

When you do this you are showing them that you think reading is important, how to read with expression and that you enjoy reading. Remember too that you do not just have to read school books; you could just as well read a joke book or something from a newspaper. Read to them often and discuss what you have read – ask what I/we shall read next? Reading to your child will not make them lazy about reading.

Paired Reading. What is it?

Paired reading is when an adult and child read aloud together the words of the book. It makes reading less pressurised. Look through the book and talk about it. You start reading. Ask your child to point at the words as you read. After a couple of pages ask your child to read aloud with you. If your child makes a mistake, point at the word and say it correctly then read on together. If your child feels confident he or she might like to do some reading on their own. Let your voice fade out so that only your child is reading. If they hit a difficult part, start reading with them again

A good reader is not necessarily a good reader!

Remember that reading aloud to someone is very different to reading quietly to yourself.

Helping Pre-schoolers get started: some ideas

Children who are familiar with books and stories before they start school are better prepared to cope with the demands of formal literacy teaching.

It's never too early to start sharing stories, babies respond to the sound of your voice.

Repeating favourite stories again and again helps build childrens' language.

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Introduce your baby to a variety of books: big, small, bath books, squashy, noisy etc. Some babies will show little interest often only in one picture, this is natural.

Keep books in your bag and in the car.

Ask questions about pictures.

Let them pretend to read - this is a great way to start by making up their own stories.

Take photos of your child and of familiar objects or places. Use these to make books about your child.

Helping 3-5 year olds to read.

Read for your child, let them turn the page and guess what will happen next.

Follow the words with your finger, point out pictures and talk together about the story (once again let them pretend to read with you).

Use funny voices and actions to make the characters come alive. Remember little and often is best – a good ten minutes is better than a difficult half hour.

Choose books together and do not object if they choose the same books again and again - if they keep going back to a book it is because they are getting something from it.

Helping 5-8 year olds to read

Make your child their own special place to keep their books.

Show them how to turn the pages carefully.

Point out words all around you.

Visit your library.

Make time to read - read at bedtime every night.

Encourage them to share reading with the family.

Be positive and let them know that it is alright to make mistakes.

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

Follow the words with your finger and sound out the words.

Helping 9-11 year olds to read

Visit your library as a family, take out CDroms of books too.

Make time to read as a family, encourage independent reading but do not be afraid to tell a bedtime story

Read all texts, yellow pages, internet and cookery books etc.

Encourage them to read to other members of the family.

Let them read to the end of the line before correcting them. Do not always point out mistakes if their error has not detracted from the text.

Help them spot words they know within larger more complicated words.

Let them read their favourites and don't worry overly if they read only one kind of book.

When they read aloud encourage them to read with expression. This will help read more fluently

Buy and use a simple dictionary to check the meanings of some new words.

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Why the Male is vital!

It is a fact that in many families mothers still are the main focuses for children's education. Research shows that when fathers become involved, their sons' and daughters' achievements are enhanced. Dad's input and involvement is very important especially if reading is perceived as a 'girly' thing. For many boys, fathers, uncles, grandfathers etc. are their main role model in life. Seeing them enjoy reading will help boys realise that they too can do the same, even if it is just a matter of finding the right material. Boys tend to be more competitive and if they constantly come second, can be turned off - set this against the fact that girls outperform boys in literacy tests throughout school life and so it is vitally important that they are encouraged to enjoy reading. It is not just a skill to get a job, it is fun and will support your child's other interests. Remember too you do not have to think in terms of 'proper' story books, many boys and their dads prefer to read non-fiction, magazines, programmes, league tables and reports, how-to manuals and comic books. Start with interests you share with your child and use these as a basis of your shared reading

They should be reading Shakespeare!

No. The best way to turn children off 'the classics' is to force them to read them when they are not ready, but you are!

Don't stop at 11.

It is obvious that children and adults enjoy being read to and listening to stories. There is no reason to stop reading with your child when they reach senior school and many reasons to continue. Research shows that boys especially benefit from this.

In a nutshell.

Regular reading for pleasure and enjoyment of a wide range of materials can be the foundation for educational achievement and a lifelong reading habit.

Still need convincing?

Reading with your child can improve your relationships with them and can improve confidence in your ability to provide support.

Places to find more information.

www.yearofreading.org.uk

www.readingconnects.org.uk

www.readingchampions.org.uk

www.clpe.co.uk

www.readtogether.co.uk

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February 2008