

Tips on how to help at home with...

Reading

Promoting reading at home is the most important way that parents can help their child. Make sure your child has regular reading practice and check they understand what they read. Here are some more tips on helping your child with reading:

- When you read to your child, make the experience interactive - ask questions about the story, the pictures, and what they think of the characters
- Use dictionaries together for difficult words - a picture dictionary can make exploring language more interesting
- If your child finds a word difficult to pronounce, help them by covering part of the word up and encourage them to sound out the word in manageable chunks. As children identify sounds in words that they recognise, this prompts their pronunciation of the word as a whole.
- Enroll your child at the local library so they can try new books regularly
- Keep an eye out for the themes that catch your child's imagination at school - and help follow it up with more reading
- When you come across an unusual or funny-sounding word, help your child find out what it means and write it on the fridge door with magnetic letters

Encourage your child to pick up other books around the house to boost familiarity with 'grown-up' language. Suggest a reading list, and encourage your child to write down thoughts on the books they have read.

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Writing and spelling

It's easier to get into good handwriting habits early on than to correct poor writing later, when the pressure of schoolwork is greater. The same goes for spelling. Help your child to see writing and spelling skills not only as fun, but as something important and to be proud of:

- You can help your child by writing words and sentences for them to copy and supporting them when completing their weekly handwriting sheets.
- Emphasise the links between drawing and writing, and make sure your child always signs finished artwork.
- Encourage your child to be inspired by examples of good handwriting in museums, galleries and books.
- Older children can develop their writing and social skills together by finding penfriends through school or clubs, or keeping in touch with friends through writing letters.
- Encourage children to play games such as hang-man to help spelling and handwriting.

Websites to support literacy learning at home:

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/interactive/literacy/index.htm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks2bitesize/english/>

http://www.innovationslearning.co.uk/subjects/english/activities/literature_comp/lit_comp_home.htm

Things to remember when reading at home & school

What to read...

Try to read out loud, and silently, as much as possible. This does not have to be just from your school reading book. Newspapers, magazines, comics, road signs, packaging etc. are all good sources for reading.

If you get stuck on a word, try these.

What are the 1st & last sounds?

Are there any letter patterns you recognise?

Do the pictures give you any clues?

Try reading the sentence again, missing the word out and continuing reading.

You may now have an idea what the word is.

Always go back and read the whole sentence again when you get stuck on a word. This will help you to understand what is happening in the story.

Don't forget to use your reading diary

Each time you read alone or to someone else, record it in your reading diary.