

How I can help, once my child is an independent reader:

Reading is thinking - the purpose of reading is understanding.

Reading with your child is still important, and with a focus on questioning using the strategies below, you will help them forge forward.

How we can further improve their reading skills is by developing higher order reading skills; to increase the range of texts they read and above all to foster a love for reading and books e.g. supporting their use of the library and enjoying reading with them.

Top 10 Reading strategies that will help them further their skills:

1. Connect to the text: make a bridge between what they know to the unknown of the text. You can link/compare the text to their own experiences; to another text they have read or to something they are aware of outside of their experience e.g. other cultures.
2. Ask questions: this is the strategy that will propel them forward and keep them engaged. Encourage them to ask questions about the text - this will help them clarify their understanding. This is at the heart of thoughtful reading.
3. Expand vocabulary: the larger their vocabulary (either oral or in print) the easier it is to make sense of the text. Encourage them to ask if there is a word they do not understand. Explain these new words and model a wider vocabulary.
4. Predict and prove (Guess and Check): research suggests that when children make predictions, their understanding increases and they are more interested in the reading material. Encourage them to guess what will happen next/at the end/can they think of an alternative ending?
5. Sense it: Encourage them to use all their senses to imagine and describe the setting of the story. Can they visualise it? What might they see, smell, hear, touch? Can they pretend they are there?
6. Decide what's important: they need to be able to differentiate between less important ideas and key ideas that are central to the meaning of the text. Ask questions: *Why is that important to this story? Is that character the most important? Are they still important? Why?*
7. Infer and then draw conclusions: discuss together the meaning of the text based on all that they know and understand about it.
8. Build Fluency: rehearsal and practising regularly for fluency is important because it frees them to understand what they read.
9. Summarise and synthesise: they need to practise with you to put together separate ideas from the text into a new whole about the text - collecting key evidence together and evaluating - a process similar to working a jigsaw puzzle.
10. Checking understanding: if they become confused and this disrupts the meaning of the text they need to be encouraged to stop to clarify their understanding. They may use a range of strategies to 'fix' their comprehension when meaning goes awry. Re-reading paragraphs/pages/chapters may be very useful to reinforce meaning.

It is far more beneficial for them to spend three/four quality sessions with a book and you, covering a range of strategies than to just quickly read more books - quality not quantity.

Children develop at different rates and their attitudes towards reading will differ. If your child is not an enthusiastic reader and showing reluctance, the following may help:

- Try not to worry as your tensions will pass on to your child.
- Don't force your child to read—encourage.
- Be crafty—ask them to read the recipe for something you're cooking or information from a newspaper.
- Read to your child in a relaxed, cosy setting. Make it a pleasant, special, one to one experience.
- Share books with them—you read a page ask your child to read a page.
- Allow your child to read books which are easy then gradually move to more challenging material when your child is ready.
- If your child has a busy social life, allow him/her to read for 15 minutes before going to sleep.
- Let your child see you enjoy reading.

Reading can be a wonderful, relaxing experience and can open up a whole new world for our children. Even in this technological age we need to be able to read, and read a variety of styles and texts. As children progress through the education system, more demands will be made upon them. As parents and teachers we must help our children to become accomplished readers but we also want them to enjoy the experience so that they can go forward into the world with confidence and a skill for life.