

## Simple advice on helping a junior child enjoy reading

Congratulations! Your child has gone past the first stage of learning to read. He no longer needs to point at every word and can read or 'decode' many of the words in simple books. Of course he is not yet a totally fluent or confident reader, able to tackle anything he comes across. That takes years of practice. And as parents, it's our job to help provide as many opportunities for that practice as possible. So, how can you help him to keep going?

- **Follow your child's interests:** Is your child mad about video games or football? Dolphins or High School Musical? Whatever her interests, there will be something out there to grab her (while improving her reading skills)! Your job is to find that something! And remember, reading isn't just about books - magazines, comics and the internet are all excellent places to find appropriate levels of reading material for your child.
- **Variety:** There are so many different kinds of text out there: websites, recipe books, comics, instruction manuals, football magazines, information books and, of course, stories. Each is organised in a different way and requires different reading skills. The more experience and practice your child has tackling each of these, the better a reader she will become.
- **Reading with your child:** Some children and parents carry on reading together at bedtime for years. Even if your child doesn't want to do this, do read what he is reading from time to time. It is still fun to talk to someone else about favourite stories or articles, even if your child has read it independently.
- **TV tie-ins:** Nowadays there are often fiction and non-fiction books based around films and TV programmes, whether it's Mamma Mia or Doctor Who. Even looking at a programme's website is a great opportunity for reading practice which can lead to your child discovering further reading material which she might be interested in.
- **Make books special:** Try to put a bookshelf in your child's room or somewhere else in your home just for your child's books. This helps to give books status, whether they have been bought, given as a present, borrowed from the library or are lent by a friend.
- **Comics and magazines:** There are lots of children's magazines and comics on the market, so it's quite likely that there's one out there your child will enjoy as well, whether they're into football, kittens or Transformers. Why not help your child to order his favourite comic from your local newsagent and let him collect it every Saturday?