

Burwell Village College Primary School



How can I help my child learn to read?

A simple guide to help you to help your child learn to read.

By reading with your children regularly you are:

- stimulating their imaginations
- developing their understanding of how language works
 - helping them to discover the joys of reading
 - strengthening your relationship with your child
 - giving them a great start to their education

The school website has further guidance on:

Phonics

Reading expectations for each year group

Reading for Pleasure

Reading - is it that important?

Reading is fundamental to everything we do. If children learn to read well they will then learn to write well. We all assimilate, adapt and rewrite what we have read so it is fine to 'steal' ideas and use them in your own writing.

Reading should be fun.

No child will want to do something they hate. Always praise your child for trying hard with their reading. Make reading fun and let them know it's alright to make mistakes. We all do it!

Read yourself!

Research suggests that those pupils who read well come from a 'reading rich' home environment. This is where parents set a good example by letting children see that they read and value books.

Make time to read.

Keep to a routine and read **every day**. Choose a time when your child is not over tired and when you will be free from interruptions & turn off the TV. Keep the sessions short. A good 10 minutes is better than a difficult half hour. Split the time, part of it for reading and part of it for questioning.

- By Year 2 we expect pupils to read around 20 minutes a day,
- By year 6 at least 30 minutes a day.

Don't just read books.

Encourage them to read newspapers, TV guides, comics, magazines, cereal packets, cookery books, yellow pages, holiday brochures, leaflets, joke books, non-fiction, poetry, - in fact anything with writing on and anything they enthuse over.

The secret to reading:

Lots of practice! The more you read the better you will get at it. There are no short cuts to becoming good at anything - just Read, Read, Read and make it enjoyable.

Read, re-read, and re-read again!

For all pupils it is good practice to get them to read books several times so they can practice their vocabulary, fluency and expression. Re-reading old favourites and on occasions letting them choose books which may appear too easy for them is a great confidence builder. It can't be fun always struggling to read the next hard book, remember all people prefer to read for enjoyment, even adults have their holiday reading.

Keep in touch with school.

Please remember that all children learn at different rates. If you have any queries about your child's reading, please do not hesitate to arrange time to discuss them with their class teacher.

What should I actually do when I read with my child?

- Allow your child to look at the cover and through the book before starting to read. For younger readers you might read parts of or the whole book to them first.
- Follow the text as your child reads. Allow them to finger point or use a book mark if they need this to keep their place.
- Take turns to read alternate words, then build up to alternate sentences, paragraphs or pages.
- Reading along very quietly with your child, dropping out as they gain confidence and joining in again if they stumble

My child keeps stumbling over the words. What should I do?

When meeting an unfamiliar word there are several things you can do depending upon the word and the skills your child has developed.

Ignore or praise any sensible attempt which shows your child is using some of the skills below even if the guess is incorrect e.g. 'home' for house or 'Mum' for Mother. It is better to try and keep the reading flowing and enjoyable rather than stopping all the time. Please remember if your child is constantly struggling then the text is probably too difficult.

Suggestions for decoding a new word:

- Allow them time to look at the pictures, don't rush them.
- Say the word yourself, ask the child to repeat it and then continue reading so not to lose the flow and meaning of the text.
- Encourage your child to look at the first sound (this may be made by 1, 2 or 3 letters) and then get them to make a guess, taking into account the meaning of the sentence and any picture clues.
- Draw their attention to any repeated or rhyming text
- Build up simple phonic words using sounds and blends of sounds. e.g. **g-o-t**
ch-i-p **wh-e-n** **f-i-sh**
- Encourage them to look at the word ending in addition to the beginning and then make a sensible guess.
- Build up the word by looking for word within words e.g. **swimming turned**
- Build up the word by looking at component parts or syllables e.g. **tea/cher**
im/por/tant
- Read past the unknown word or go back to the beginning of the sentence and re-read the part leading up to the new word. This puts the word in context and will encourage the use of meaning as a clue.

My child doesn't read fluently. What should I do?

- Encourage your child to be aware of any punctuation and use it to help with the flow of the reading. Pausing at commas and full stops allows a child to scan the next sentence.
- Try getting your child to read with expression. Read the sentence with expression to your child and get them to repeat it back. Sometimes it is good fun to use your phone to record a child reading so they can actually hear what they sound like.
- Re-read well known texts and concentrate on fluency & expression rather than decoding difficult words..
- If children are constantly struggling then the text is probably too difficult.

I have read with my child, is that all?

No! Reading is only half the task. It is vital that you **talk** about the book and ask questions. To stop this interfering with continuity and meaning this is best left to the second half of a reading session. Try reading to an exciting point and stopping.

- Discuss the pictures, finding interesting detail.
- Ask simple or deductive questions: questions about the plot and the characters. **Where** were they going? **What** colour was their jumper? **Who** were they going to see? **When** did they see the castle? **How** many children were at the party? Get them to ask you questions.
- Ask Predictive questions: What do you think will happen next?
- As children get older ask hard or inference questions? Why were they going to the shops? How were they feeling? What mood were they in? Often there may not be any clear answers but there are clues in the author's choice of vocabulary. Pupils have to identify the hidden words which give the clue. For example "He **stormed** through the room." Would suggest that he was angry.
- Personalised questions: What would you do if you were there? Would you like that character to be your friend? Why?
- Preference questions: Did you like the book? What was your favourite part? Why? Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Create a list of powerful descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs) to use in your own writing. We also call them the "Wow" words.
- Look at the format of a text. Non-Fiction texts are often laid out in a particular style. E.g. letters, reports, encyclopaedias, leaflets, adverts etc.

My child already reads do I still have to listen to them?

In a hectic life it is really easy to let a good reader just sit down and read on their own. You can still play a vital part to help them develop their literary understanding even further.

Listen to them once a week and ask them the inference style questions. Get them used to asking you the meanings of new or difficult words. Get them to write them down and ask you in the morning, or keep a dictionary near the bed.

Better still as the children get older imagine the principles of a good Book Club or reading circle. Read the same book as your child, agree to stop at the same chapter and discuss what you have read. Discuss your favourite parts, the characters, the descriptions and share your predictions for the plot. Spend time exploring the **Themes** of the text. Is there humour, fear, love, loss, trial, retribution, good against evil, argument, bias, balance in the text?

Another activity is to develop **Character Profiles**.

Discuss what a character is like and the evidence from the plot and vocabulary in the text. Then using this evidence try to work out more about that character and try to justify your answer.

What would they like to wear? Would they have a tidy bedroom?

What would be their favourite drink?

Dark or milk chocolate?

What would be their favourite TV program? Book?

Favourite sport? Hobby? Newspaper?

What evidence is there in the text to support your ideas?

The ideas are endless.....

Other little ideas:

- Do the children really know the words or are they reading the story from memory? Then read the entire story or page backwards, starting at the last word and finishing with the first.
- Go to the library and choose books together.
- Read the book **then** see the movie.
- Buy book tokens as presents as part of the gift is choosing.
- Set aside 20 minutes at the weekend when everyone reads.
- Children then write their own versions of well known stories.
- Write the words on pieces of paper and re arrange them to make sentences, or play snap or word bingo.
- Do they know the meaning of the words?
- Do they know synonyms (words with similar meaning) Can they use a thesaurus.
- Get them used to reading out loud: get them to read to an audience - younger siblings & family
- To help with story writing it is very useful if they know several well known stories off by heart (3 little pigs, The Gingerbread Man etc)
- Learning jokes or poems off by heart is also useful to develop fluency, expression and performing to an audience.
- Get your child a subscription to a comic or magazine.

Remember:

Reading is Fundamental.

Reading is fun.

Reading starts at home.

and ...

You are never too old to enjoy a good story.