



## Why is reading so important?

Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.

In fact, there's evidence to suggest that reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background.



### What difference could I make as a parent?

The short answer is: a lot! Parents are by far the most important educators in a child's life and it's never too young for a child to start, even if you're only reading with your child for a few minutes a day.

Before they're born, babies learn to recognise their parents' voices. Reading to your baby from the time they're born gives them the comfort of your voice and increases their exposure to language.

### Building vocabulary and understanding

Learning to read is about listening and understanding as well as working out print. Through hearing stories, children are exposed to a rich and wide vocabulary. This helps them build their own vocabulary and improve their understanding when they listen, which is vital as they start to read. It's important for them to understand how stories work as well. Even if your child doesn't understand every word, they'll hear new sounds, words and phrases which they can then try out, copying what they have heard.

As children start to learn to read at school, you can play an important role in helping to keep them interested in books, finding out what interests them and helping them to find books that will be engaging and fun for them. Give time to helping them practise reading the books they will bring home from school.

