

Reading with your Child at Home

Share the reading experience.

- Even though your children are getting older, they still enjoy being read to.
- Take turns reading - you read a page - they read a page.
- Echo Reading - You read a word, sentence or page - they read it back to you.

Ideas from BookTrust

Here are some more tips to help you enjoy storytime together:

- Ask your child to choose what they'd like to read. They'll feel more interested in the story if they've picked it out themselves. (And don't worry if they keep returning to the same story, either!)
- If you can, turn off the TV, radio and computer. It's easier for both of you to enjoy the story without any other distractions.
- Sit close together. You could encourage your child to hold the book themselves and turn the pages, too.
- Take a look at the pictures. You don't just have to read the words on the page. Maybe there's something funny in the pictures that you can giggle about together, or perhaps your child enjoys guessing what will happen next.
- Ask questions and talk about the book. Picture books can be a great way to talk through your child's fears and worries, or to help them deal with their emotions. Give them space to talk, and ask how they feel about the situations in the story.
- Have fun! There's no right or wrong way to share a story – as long as you and your child are having fun. Don't be afraid to act out situations or use funny voices... your little ones will love it!

Encouraging a love of reading

As children get older, with lots of other activities competing for their time, how can you encourage them to make time for reading?

Here are some of ideas:

- Read yourself! It doesn't matter what it is – pick up a newspaper or magazine, take a look at a cookery book, read a computer manual, enjoy some poetry or dive into a romance or detective novel. And get your children to join in – if

you're cooking, could they read the recipe? If you're watching TV, can they read out the listings?

- Give books as presents. And encourage your children and their friends to swap books with each other – it'll give them a chance to read new stories, and get them all talking about what they're reading.
- Visit the local library together. It's always fun choosing new books to read, and keep an eye out for special author events at the library or local bookshops – children love meeting their favourite authors. Jacqueline Wilson and Anthony Horowitz always have signing queues that are miles long!
- Encourage children to carry a book at all times. That way, they'll never be bored (this is something you can do, too!)
- Have a family bookshelf. If you can, have bookshelves in your children's bedrooms, too.
- Keep reading together. Just because your children are older, it doesn't mean you have to stop sharing stories – perhaps you could try the Harry Potter series or A Series of Unfortunate Events.
- Don't panic if your child reads the same book over and over again. Let's be honest - we've all done it!

What if my child doesn't like reading?

Research has shown that reading for pleasure can make a huge difference to children - not only academically (even in subjects like maths) but also socially and emotionally.

But what if your child doesn't enjoy reading? Whether they find it difficult or think it's boring, it's not always something young people are keen to do. But here are some things that could help...

- Talk about books. Talking to children about books and stories can help them to realise how exciting they are. Show an interest in what they've read, ask questions about it, and swap opinions.
- Make it fun! There are so many fun things you can do with books beyond reading them. Maybe you could ask your children to draw their favourite character or act out what they've read for you. Or perhaps you could try recreating some classic book covers and taking photos!
- ... and try funny books. Everyone likes a good giggle! (If your child is brave, scary stories or gory horror might be worth a go too.)
- Don't worry about what your children are reading. Whether it's a short story, poetry, a graphic novel, non-fiction, joke books, a comic or even the back of a cereal packet, it doesn't matter what your child is reading - as long as they're

enjoying it! Anything could kickstart a love of books. (And don't panic if they read the same book over and over again, either.)

- Give them the chance to choose. It's a great idea to give children the chance to choose what they read. Maybe you could take them to a bookshop and let them pick out something as a treat, or make regular library visits to help them figure out what they enjoy.
- Enjoy books out loud! Why not read part of a book to your child, then leave it with them to explore further on their own? Children might enjoy listening to audiobooks, too – the combination of hearing the story out loud and holding the physical book could be a big help. Why not try listening to a story the next time you're in the car together?
- Find books related to their interests. If your child is a gamer, why not try choose-your-own-adventure books, Minecraft guides or stories about virtual reality? If they like sport, you could try one of Kwame Alexander's verse novels or a biography of their favourite football player. If a book is about something they already love, it could be a brilliant way to get them hooked. Or perhaps their favourite film is based on a book - you could enjoy the story together and talk about how the movie and the original story are different.
- Try series fiction. If your child loves the first Harry Potter book, there are six more stories for them to dive into! There are some wonderful series out there that have converted reluctant readers into bookworms - you could try the Tom Gates books by Liz Pichon or the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series.