

5 tips TO NURTURE A LOVE OF READING

There is a lot of advice out there on how to support your child to read, but it can be confusing to know how to encourage your children to engage joyfully and confidently with books.

Here are 5 ways to prepare and foster a love of reading in your child as they start school.

1. *Prepare the soil - start early to set strong foundations*



Children need to begin playing with rhyme and sounds before school. This should all be through hearing only (auditory)— letters come later. Exploring the sounds in words helps set your child up with a strong understanding of speech sounds. Introduce your child to the letter names for the letters of the alphabet, both upper and lower case. Book in an eye and ear check before the start of school and get them checked regularly.

2. *Planting the seed - be positive and hopeful*



Make reading fun and relaxing! Have a special place to read—a bean bag, in their cubby, or under a tree are all places that can make it a positive experience. Reading is easy to put off when life is busy. A schedule helps it not become overlooked. Start by reading for just five minutes and build from there. Play games where you predict what the book will be about from the front cover and title. Play rhyming, syllable and sound games to keep things fun.

3. *Nurture the seedling - model good reading*



Model good reading behaviour by sharing your own love of books and let your child see you value reading. Use your finger when reading to show how text goes from left to right. Explore what words are and the spaces between words. Recognise the difference between words, spaces, punctuation, letters and numbers. Point out the front and back of books and model how to turn pages one at a time. When reading aloud, make sure you stop and explain any new words to your children.

4. *Be patient - don't compare!*



Don't compare your child with other students or even their siblings. All children learn to read at different rates. Sometimes it can be a long process to establish the groundwork, but this will establish a strong foundation for reading and language learning for the rest of their lives. Continue to be positive and encouraging even when things seem to be taking longer than expected.

5. *Seasonal growth - practice and consolidation*



Reading the same book over and over helps build fluency skills and consolidates new words or speech sounds learnt. Reading should never be too difficult for children as they will give up. Independent readers are sent home when students are ready for them. If they don't know a word, encourage them to sound it out. If they are still stuck just tell them and move on. Encourage children to be word detectives and seek to learn the meanings of words they don't know.

To find out more or to book a school tour
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