

English at home

Practical activities you can do to help your child at home

These activities can be done in any language, not just English. Studies show that the stronger a child's home language is, the better their English will be when they start learning it!

Talking with your child

You can start talking to your baby before they are even born to support a wide variety of literacy skills and to build a connection between you and your child. Show your child good listening skills like looking at them when you are talking to them and when they are talking to you and repeating back some things that they say so they know you are listening to them. You will be amazed at the way your child can have a conversation with you before you are even able to understand the words they are saying.

Here is a video that shows the importance of these conversations with your child [Father and toddler have an adorable conversation](#)

Naming things

Whenever you are out and about, name different things that you can see. You could play games like 'I Spy' or 'I went to the park and saw...' to help you do this. This will help your child to widen their vocabulary and understand the world around them.

Ask them about their day

When you collect your child from school, try not to be on your phone unless it is urgent and at meal times, try to make it device-free time. Use this time to ask them about their day and tell them about yours! This supports their speaking and listening and strengthens your bond.

Nursery rhymes

Just like speaking, you can start singing to your child before they are even born. Check out our Green Lane Rhyme Spine for more information about the benefits of sharing nursery rhymes.

Share a story

This can be a really special part of your day. You should always try to read with your child at bedtime and avoid using screens before bed. You can read their favourite story to them lots of times, or read their reading book, share your reading together book from school, read a library book or even make up a story of your own.

This guidance has been written by the Department for Education to support you to read with your child at home.

How to read a story to your child

If you can find the time beforehand, read the read-aloud book to yourself first, so you can think about how you're going to read it to your child.

The first time you read the book:

- Make reading aloud feel like a treat. Make it a special quiet time and cuddle up so you can both see the book.

- Show curiosity about what you're going to read: 'This book looks interesting. It's about an angry child. I wonder how angry he gets...'
- Read through the whole story the first time without stopping too much. Let the story weave its own magic.
- Read with enjoyment. If you're not enjoying it, your child won't.

Read favourite stories over and over again. When you have read the book a few times:

- Let your child pause, think about and comment on the pictures.
- If you think your child did not understand something, try to explain: 'Oh! I think what's happening here is that...'
- Chat about the story and pictures: 'I wonder why she did that?'; 'Oh no, I hope she's not going to...'; 'I wouldn't have done that, would you?'
- Link the stories to your own family experiences: 'This reminds me of when ...'
- Link stories to others that your child knows: 'Ah! Do you remember the dragon in....? Do you remember what happened to him?'
- Encourage your child to join in with the bits they know.
- Avoid asking questions to test what your child remembers.
- Avoid telling children that reading stories is good for them.

Practice, practice, practice

Reading fluency is really important. This means that your child's reading is quick enough for them to understand what they are reading and they are able to read in phrases that sound a bit like talking. The only way to achieve this is by practising reading a book that matches their reading level lots and lots of times. Your child's reading book has been carefully chosen for them so they should read this book several times whilst they have it at home to support their fluency.

Real world reading

Words are everywhere and your child will begin reading from a very early age. If they recognise the sign for 'Asda' or 'Aldi', that is reading! Try reading words on cards, road signs, buses, shops and products when you are out and about with your child or ask them to come and help you to read recipes and instructions at home.

Be a reading role model

Your child learns from you. If they see you enjoying reading – it can be any reading in any language – they will be more likely to understand how important it is and want to read themselves.

Handwriting

We teach cursive handwriting and use the scheme, Letter Join, to support our children to form lower case and upper-case letters correctly. In Year 2, our children spend more time learning how to join letters correctly. Take a look at the workshop resources to find out more including correct letter formation and pencil grip.