

“Reading for pleasure is the single biggest factor in success later in life, outside of an education. Study after study has shown that those children who read for pleasure are the ones who are most likely to fulfil their ambitions. If your child reads, they will succeed – it’s that simple.” **Bali Rai**

“Books transform children’s lives - they can open windows onto new worlds, widen their horizons or even just make them laugh themselves silly! Reading for pleasure can give children the key they need to unlock their dreams.” **Christopher Edge**

Reading is like swimming.

Getting your 10-metre certificate is not the end of your swimming career. It's the beginning. Once you can use a stroke or two to propel yourself along, you can strike out, build up your swimming stamina and enjoy the water. Perhaps in time you'll swim the Channel or compete in the Olympics. The possibilities are endless but not if you hardly ever go in the water.

To become confident deep-end readers, children have to practise all the time. Otherwise they will slip backwards and even the decoding skills will dull. Real readers go on getting better at it throughout their lives.

And the best place for a child to do that essential daily practice is at home.



Reading for pleasure puts children ahead in the classroom, study finds

Children who read for pleasure are likely to do significantly better at school than their peers, according to new research from the Institute of Education (IOE) 2013.

The IOE study, which is believed to be the first to examine the effect of reading for pleasure on cognitive development over time, found that children who read for pleasure made more progress in maths, vocabulary and spelling between the ages of 10 and 16 than those who rarely read.

The research was conducted by Dr Alice Sullivan and Matt Brown, who analysed the reading behaviour of approximately 6,000 young people being followed by the 1970 British Cohort Study, which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. They looked at how often the teenagers read during childhood and their test results in maths, vocabulary and spelling at ages 5, 10 and 16.

The researchers, who are based in the IOE's Centre for Longitudinal Studies, compared children from the same social backgrounds who had achieved the same test scores as each other both at ages 5 and 10. They discovered that those who read books often at age 10 and more than once a week at age 16 gained higher results in all three tests at age 16 than those who read less regularly.

Perhaps surprisingly, reading for pleasure was found to be more important for children's cognitive development between ages 10 and 16 than their parents' level of education. The combined effect on children's progress of reading books often, going to the library regularly and reading newspapers at 16 was four times greater than the advantage children gained from having a parent with a degree.

Children who were read to regularly by their parents at age 5 performed better in all three tests at age 16 than those who were not helped in this way.

Dr Sullivan notes that reading for pleasure had the strongest effect on children's vocabulary development, but the impact on spelling and maths was still significant. "It may seem surprising that reading for pleasure would help to improve children's maths scores," she said. "But it is likely that strong reading ability will enable children to absorb and understand new information and affect their attainment in all subjects."

Reading for Pleasure



Awbridge
Primary School

with your child



Step away from the bookbag!

Like all parents we tend to compare our child to others, and are tempted to compare their reading to that of the other children in the class – stop now! They are all different and will progress at very different rates. You are in the best position to help your child with reading, but comparing them to other children does not help either of you.

So what can you do? School will teach your child to read, but what can you do at home to make sure that they are reading for pleasure and not just because they have to?

Children of readers read!

The most important thing that you can do is to create a reading environment in your home and in your life. Have books in your home, and make sure that your child sees that books and reading are an important part of your life. Books are cheaply available from charity shops and boot sales, and a library ticket costs nothing at all! From a very young age (pre-reader) you should let your child dip in and out of books whenever they want.

◆ Draw attention to the fact that there are words everywhere!

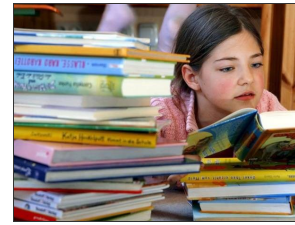
Give your child reading with a purpose so that it does not feel as if you are expecting them to carry out a homework-like task. Ask them what the competition is on the cereal packet, put the subtitles on when they are watching their favourite TV show, stick post-it notes on the objects around the house that have new and exciting words to learn (such as television, radiator, refrigerator.) Children have incredible powers of assimilation and suck up new words with ease, provided they see and hear them repeatedly.

◆ Read with your child.



When they hit a word that they don't know, remember, they have never met this word before and will need an introduction. Let them try three times, no more than that because it becomes horribly frustrating. This shouldn't be like a lesson – leave those for school. Don't set a rigid time for reading – do it for as long as your child wants to, and try to fit it into different times and places.

◆ Let your child read alone.



No help, no input, just let them sit with words in front of their faces. These books need to be their choice and it might be something you loathe, but I'm afraid that's part of the deal! Reading alone is often best done at bedtime as it can become a good habit. Make sure that there are no other distractions when they are reading alone as first readers. Switch off the TV and allow them quiet time to simply sit with a book. Very small (pre-reading) children love to do this and will often make up the story for themselves as they learn to recognise words.

◆ Read to your child.

It is hugely important for children of all ages to be read to. Not just picture books, but longer books with chapters that they are not yet ready to read alone. It is a superb way of expanding their vocabulary, it gives them something to aim for, and it's lovely. Never assume that your child is too old for this, you are never too old for a bedtime story!



If you follow these four simple points your child's reading will improve. Ideally you should be doing all four, but if you can't fit it all in every day, don't panic! This is not meant to be a stressful thing for either of you.

Encouraging a child to see reading as a pleasurable part of their lives takes time and patience, but that's no reason you shouldn't all enjoy it. It takes time to form the best habits of all, but it's worth it! A final point to remember; the adult controls how much DS/YouTube/internet time a child can have. If they can do that regularly then they can also read every day?

Commonly asked questions...

I'm really busy, I don't have lots of time for reading so what can I do?

Just ten minutes a day can make a huge difference to your child's reading. That's all it takes! Even in a traffic jam your child could be doing a bit of reading to you. Look for words everywhere, when you are out and about - on signs, posters, even on the subtitles on the TV – it all counts towards building that reading environment, and forming those reading habits.

My child hates books, what can I do?

Create a positive book-filled environment, and don't expect a quick fix! Don't be negative about comics and magazines, words are words and a comic might just tip a negative child over into positive. It's a slow process to shift attitudes, but more than worth it. Also; remember that the adult controls how much DS/YouTube/internet time a child can have.

I'm convinced my child has dyslexia, what should I do?

Firstly, make an appointment with our Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Amy Wake. Before you go, make specific notes about your child's problems with reading and writing, but don't be tempted to look it all up online as this will probably not be helpful. All children are different and some come to reading much later than others – this does not necessarily mean they are dyslexic.

My child is reading the same books over and over, how can I stop them?

Most children go through a period of this, it's completely normal behaviour. Let them do, it but encourage them to find time to fit new books in as well. Talk to a librarian and ask for books that are in the same style of the ones that they are hooked on.

