

EA Literacy Service

Ideas to support a pupil with a reading difficulty at home



This document has been developed by the EA Literacy Service (Northern Ireland). It is intended for parents/carers who may be supporting a child or young person with literacy difficulties at home. Parents/carers may find some of these ideas useful. This is not a specific programme to be followed verbatim nor is it a prescriptive list of what should be done. It is a range of good practice ideas and activities you may decide to use based on the needs of the child. We hope you and your child find at least some of the content helpful and enjoyable.

The EA Literacy Service Team

Some ideas for parents to support reading:

- ❖ Set aside a special time and place for reading; no phone, no TV, no making tea. **Give them your full attention.**
- ❖ Sit side by side and keep it happy and relaxed.
- ❖ Focus on what they do well rather than any mistakes.
- ❖ To keep them interested provide a wide range of reading materials.
- ❖ Books should look attractive and interesting.
- ❖ Make sure the book is not too difficult, as this will only cause the child to become frustrated.
- ❖ Let them choose a book - Use the 5-finger test (See page 6).
- ❖ If your child is interested in a book but is struggling, read it to them or let them listen to it on CD/audio app.
- ❖ Discuss the book **before** you read it - set the scene.
 - I wonder what it is about...
 - Who do you think is in it?
 - Who wrote this book?
 - Who drew the pictures?
- ❖ Discuss the book **after** you have read it-
 - Could you see pictures in your head when we read it?
 - What do you think of that story?
 - I wonder what will happen next....
 - I don't like this character, what did you think?
- ❖ Use a bookmark or an overlay or allow them to point with one finger if they keep losing their place. (Make sure their finger does not cover the words.) If you are guiding them, try pointing with a pencil **above the words.**



- ❖ Allow them to re-read books that they have enjoyed and have been successful in reading.
- ❖ Before you read, ask them to look down the page, get them to point out if there are any words they might not know, refer to them as 'tricky words'. Then rehearse them by telling them what they are.
- ❖ Read aloud together.
- ❖ Read aloud together and when the child gives a sign, stop reading and allow the child to continue on their own.
- ❖ Read alternate sentences.
- ❖ Read alternate pages.
- ❖ 'PPP' - when listening to your child read and you are supporting their reading, if they do not know a word use the strategy - Pause, Prompt and Praise.
- ❖ When listening to your child read for pleasure, just provide the unknown word(s).
- ❖ If they become tired or frustrated finish the reading yourself. Do not leave a book unread or a chapter unfinished. Use a pleasant tone and good intonation when reading.
- ❖ Tap out the syllables in longer words.
- ❖ Write the words they do not know on a sticky pad and look at them later, breaking them down into syllables or looking for 'tricky' bits in them.
- ❖ Remind them that every syllable contains a vowel sound e.g. hos pit al / gen er ous
- ❖ Play 'find the word' when the reading is over. Call out a word and get the child to find the word in the text.
- ❖ To help with prediction you can read the text and leave a gap that the child has to fill with a word that makes sense.



- ❖ Be prepared for your child to be unresponsive sometimes. Reading can be challenging.
- ❖ Be patient. Avoid unhelpful negative comments and non-verbal body language.
- ❖ Praise all good attempts at working out words.
- ❖ If your school would prefer you not to read further on than the designated reading pages, ask for supplementary material to read for pleasure. The more practice they get the better.
- ❖ When you are reading, tell your child that you are having difficulty with a word and cannot read it. Ask them 'what can you do to work out a word you don't know? The reply you want is -
 - Say the first sound
 - Try to sound across the word
 - Look at the picture
 - Chunk the syllables
 - Read on
 - Think, does this make sense?
- ❖ Encourage the use of reading everywhere: Comics, magazines, catalogues, birthday cards, car/bike manuals, e-bay, TV guide, sports pages, map reading, road signs, what is on at the cinema, timetables, shop signs and menus.
- ❖ Carefully consider when buying books as presents, as you would like an appropriate interest level and readability. (Remember the five-finger test pg. 6)



When helping with reading homework

If you come to a word you cannot read,
look more closely at the word and ...

Say the first sound: s

Sound across the word: s i ck

Look at the picture:



Chunk the syllables: yes / ter / day

Read on: 'Yesterday I took my _____ dog to the vet'.

Think - does this make sense?

Go back, check it and try to fix it!



How to choose a book to read

Five Finger Test:



Choose a book to read.

Open it in the middle.

Read down a page and raise one finger for each word on the page that you cannot read.

No fingers or one finger:

This book is easy for you to read. Have fun!

Two Fingers:

This book is just right for you enjoy your reading!

Three fingers:

This book is challenging but you may still enjoy it. Try it!

Four fingers:

This book will be very challenging. Read with a partner and /or a dictionary handy.

Five-fingers:

This book is probably too hard to be fun. Save it for another day or read it with an adult who can help you.