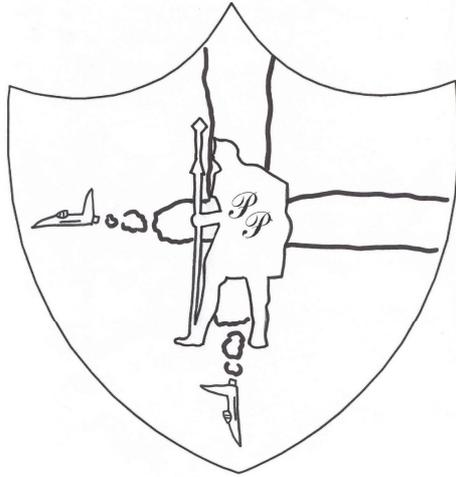
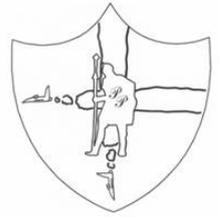


Helping with



Reading and Writing

Writing



Learning how to write is one of the most important skills we ever learn. From nursery school to adulthood we are surrounded by words and written information of all kinds, so the sooner we get the grips with it, the better. However, people don't write just because someone else thinks they should. There are all sorts of reasons why we pick up a pencil or pen and start scribbling away.

Most people write to make life easier.

A good deal of writing is to do with our jobs.

People write because it's exciting.

Many of us write to keep in touch.

Sometimes writing can make us feel better.

Encourage your child to 'have a go' at the word – 'try writing'.
As your child "how many phonemes (sounds) can you hear in the word?"

What are the phonemes (sounds)? This is the way your child is taught to spell in the very early stages at school.

Don't correct every spelling error they make.

As they progress, children need to develop visual strategies –
LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK.

Teach children to look for words within words.

Encourage an interest in words – look for words that come from other languages – Eskimo, pizza, café, anorak.

The Essential Ingredients of Good Writing

For basic writing to become good writing it needs to have the following essential elements:

A love of reading

If your child reads, they will be learning the craft from experts.

An interesting writing activity

Some ideas for writing include sending messages, telling stories, keeping records and writing about their hobbies.

Plenty of time

Children may have a head full of stories but they need time to think them through and write them down. Don't rush them.

Clear thinking

Sometimes your child will benefit from talking with you in order to clarify their thoughts before writing about it.

Practice

Remember, practice makes perfect. Nobody gets it right first time, so let your child have lots of time to practice their writing skills.

Ten Things To Do

Keep it real

Have them write a letter, an e-mail or even a text message to a relative or friend.

Make it special

Make a special book about things that are important to them.

Write together

When you need to make a shopping list or even write a letter, let your child help you.

Start a diary

Let them write about the things that matter to them. If they do choose to share the diary with you, don't be cross if you read something unflattering or silly.

Make notes

Encourage your child to take notes on trips and to describe what they saw.

Copying is not wrong

Your child is bound to have a favourite pop song, poem or nursery rhyme. Encourage them to learn the words by writing them down.

Make lists

Helps a child as much as possible about the world they see around them.

Play word games

There are lots of games such as Scrabble and Boggle. Building a vocabulary builds confidence. Try crossword puzzles, word games, anagrams and cryptograms.

Make it fun

Make a book filled with jokes, puzzles, riddles and so on.

Dictionary and Thesaurus

Make sure your child has access to a dictionary and thesaurus

How Can I Help My Young Child As They Begin To Write?

Find time to show children that you value reading and writing for yourself; you are a powerful model.

Take children to the library.

Share simple picture storybooks.

Read and sing nursery rhymes and rhyming games.

Read books which feature rhyme and repetition.

Talk about the events of the day, encouraging children to join in.

Talk about print in the environment – point it out.

Show children how you use writing.

Provide a special place for children to write.

Provide a range of writing materials.

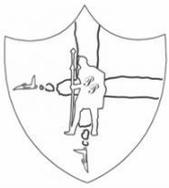
Find opportunities to display children's names.

Talk about alphabet books and the letters of the alphabet.

Provide magnetic or plastic letter tiles for children's play.

Allow children to use a typewriter or word processor.

Celebrate children's efforts and encourage them to have-a-go at writing.



Reading

Reading is one of the most important skills we ever acquire. Being able to read opens the door to a new world of experience and learning. Children need as much support as possible from home and school in order to acquire the skills needed in reading. A strong home/school partnership, where parents and teachers work together, is of great benefit to all children. The role of parents, as well as teachers, is vital.

Reading Activities

Each of the following activities is a good way to encourage reading. They will show how reading is an important part of our daily lives and how it has a purpose. Try to involve other members of the family as well.

Follow recipes.

Make models.

Read a letter from a friend.

Read instructions for a board game.

Look in the newspaper to find the time and location of local events.

Use shopping lists.

Read the instructions for operating the DVD.

Read the weather forecast in the newspaper.

Use a range of catalogues and brochures.

Read the television guide to choose which programmes to watch.

Follow simple instructions such as for planting seeds.

Compare ingredients in packets of cereal.

Read the news headlines.

Plot the route on a road map.

Read the car manual to find out where to top up the oil and water.

Reading To Your Child

As well as talking to your child this is the most important thing you can do. It encourages a love of books, widens your child's vocabulary – and it's great fun for both of you.

All children enjoy being read to and you can get a lot of useful messages across at the same time. Talk about what is going on in the story and what your child thinks might happen next, how the characters might be feeling, and so on. Point to the words as you read them. Enjoy looking at and talking about the pictures together. Encourage children to move their eyes and fingers from left to right.

Don't stop reading to your child. No one is too old to enjoy being read to! Try reading a longer book (which your child might not be able to read alone) in instalments. Some children prefer non-fiction, so look out for good information books in the library.

If your child is stuck on a word there are several things you can do to help. Ask them to miss the word out, read to the end of the sentence and then go back to the problem word. Encourage them to point to the word and look at the first letter ... first two letters ... last letter ... Use a piece of card, old envelope, etc to cover up part of the word so that the child can tackle it in 'bite sized chunks', e.g. in-side. If they find it really hard do not be afraid to tell them; never have a battle over a word!

And don't read if not in the mood!

Never compare one child with another as they all learn at different rates, and do not be in a hurry.

GETTING GOING

Children can enjoy pretending to read as they go through a familiar story with you. This is an important stage and you can help them by talking about the story and the pictures and by beginning to point out letters and odd words which they will begin to recognise.

AND LATER ...

If he/she brings a book home from school, always try to be positive and encouraging about your child's reading and find something to praise. For example he/she may correct a mistake himself/herself; read a word which is wrong but which makes sense; chose a word which looks similar even though it is not the right one; read with expression; re-read a passage to 'make sure'. These are all things which show that a child is really thinking about what he/she is reading. Continue to talk about the story, the characters, what might happen next and so on and look carefully at the pictures. It is important that your child tries to understand what he/she is reading.

Countdown to Launch Your Child into Reading!

10. Talk with your child.
9. Enjoy rhymes and jingles together.
8. Share picture books with your child; tell your child stories.
7. Read to and with your child regularly.
6. Make the most of your reading together.
5. Writing and reading go together, so write with your child, too.
4. Don't forget all the print in daily life.
3. Enjoy it!
2. Keep in touch with the school.
1. When the child is 'launched' into reading, keep him/her going on the voyage of discovery.

Suggestions for Helping Book Discussions

General questions:

What kind of book did you think this was going to be?

Have you read any other books like this one?

Could this story really have happened?

Who was telling the story?

Where were there any parts you particularly like/dislike?

What will you tell your friends about this story?

Did the story remind you of anything that you've done?

Plot questions:

What happened first in the story?

Did you guess the ending?

Did you like the ending? How would you have liked it to end?

Time and setting questions:

When did the action of the story take place?

Where did the story happen?

Would you like to visit this place?

Character questions:

Which character did you like most? least? Why?

Do you know any people like the characters in the book?

Whom would you most like to meet from the story? Why?

Attitudes in the book:

Who are the most active characters – boys or girls?

Which characters come out best in the end?

Does the author use stereotypes of race, colour or age?

Helping Your Child Choose What to Read

Don't be too anxious about their choice of reading material. It is more important that they read something that they enjoy rather than something that someone else thinks they should read.

Take turns in choosing what to read. You can then encourage them to read a wider range of books.

Don't worry if your child selects a book that you think is too hard. If this happens, read the book together. By sharing the reading with them, you will be showing them how to read perhaps longer or more complicated books.

Ask your child's teacher to recommend books that they might enjoy reading. If your child has read an extract of a book at school, they might like to read the rest of the book at home, or if they have read one book in a series at school, they might like to read other books from the series.

Encourage your child to re-read favourite books.

Ask family and friends to recommend books that they have enjoyed.

Make regular visits to the local library or bookshop to choose from a wide range of books. You could:

- recommend books that you have enjoyed;
- ask the librarian or shop assistant to make suggestions;
- find books about a sport or hobby;
- find books with interesting covers and read the blurb and some pages together to 'test' them out.

Using short stories can be a good start. They are quick to read, so are easier to stick with. You can get collections of short stories that are in themes such as school stories, spooky stories, funny stories and sporty stories.

Poetry is also a good starting point. Poems are usually short, so can be read easily and quickly. Collections of poems often have excellent pictures. You can get collections of poems with different themes such as funny poems and school poems and spooky poems. Many children will read poems even though they do not like stories.