

Creating Positive Reading Environments in the Home



- Scout for things children might like to read. Use their interests and hobbies as starting points.
- Leave all sorts of reading materials including books, magazines, and colourful catalogs in visible places around the home.
- Let children see you reading for pleasure in your own spare time.
- Take children to the library regularly. Explore the children's section together. Ask a librarian to suggest books your children might enjoy.
- Present reading as a purposeful activity and a way to find information, for example, learning to make paper airplanes or planning a family trip.
- Encourage older children to read to younger brothers and sisters, cousins or friends. Older children enjoy showing off their skills to an admiring audience.
- Play games that are reading-related, for example, spelling games played with letter tiles or dice, or board games that require players to read spaces, cards or directions.
- Share your own reactions to things you read and encourage children to do likewise, for example, while running errands, over dinner or in another informal setting.
- Set aside a regular time for reading in the family, independent of schoolwork, for example, during the 20 minutes before lights out, just after dinner or whatever fits into the household schedule. As little as 10 minutes of free reading a day can help improve a child's skills.
- Extend the child's positive reading experiences. For example, if a child enjoyed a book about dinosaurs, try to follow up with a visit to a natural history museum.





Parental Involvement

The earlier a parent gets involved in their child's reading and educational development the better. Parental involvement is at its most effective and beneficial when a parent works directly with their child on learning activities at home, in practical, engaging ways.

The Primary School Curriculum, (DES, 1999), in its introduction, acknowledges the key role of parents in young people's education:

Parents are the child's primary educators, and the life of the home is the most potent factor in his or her development during the primary school years. (p. 21)

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (DES, 2011) also places emphasis on the involvement of parents in children's learning.

The support of parents who are engaged in their child's learning has a significant positive impact on a child's educational achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy. Young people achieve better when their parents take an active interest in their education, supporting and encouraging them and creating high but achievable expectations. (p.19)

Oral Language and Reading

Reading is essential for improving oral language skills. When children read they build on their stock of vocabulary and they learn to recognise and appreciate different writing styles and uses of language.

Oral language and reading are part of the same development of literacy skills such as:

- Comprehension skills
- Fluency
- Expression and intonation
- Ability to decode words