

## Helping your child read at home

### 1. Set the scene

- **Turn off the TV, radio and computer if you can.** It's easier for both of you to enjoy the story without any other distractions.
- **Sit close together.** You could encourage your child to hold the book themselves and turn the pages, too.
- **Get other family members involved.** Storytime is something that everyone can enjoy, and it's a great way to bond. For example, there are lots of books about the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren – maybe your little one would enjoy sharing one of those stories with their own nanny and grandad?
- **Ask your child to choose what they'd like to read.** They'll feel more interested in the story if they've picked it out themselves. (And don't worry if they keep returning to the same story, either!)

### 2. While your child is reading a book, try asking:

- Will you catch me up on the story? What's happened so far?
- What do you think will happen next?
- If you were that character, what would you have done differently in that situation?
- Where is the book set?
- If the main character in that story lived next door, would you be friends?
- What does the place look like in your head as you read? Would you want to visit there?
- Have you learned any new words or facts so far?

### 3. Other top tips:

- **When used appropriately and with an adult, technology can provide an important route into reading for many children**, including those in the early years, and boys. Feel free, at times, to use your mobile phones, tablets, computers, laptops and other devices to engage your child in reading and activities that can help them build their vocabulary. This can include a multitude of activities, such as:
  - Telling a story using pictures on your phone
  - Video calling friends and relatives to engage children in conversation
  - Using YouTube to find the lyrics to nursery rhymes
  - Using apps to read e-books or listen to audiobooks (many organisations are providing them for free during school closures)
- **Engage children in games and activities that help them learn new words.**
  - For older children, these could be crossword puzzles, word searches or word hunts. They can cut out words in magazines related to a particular theme to create a word map. For younger children, focus on playing with letters and sounds. You can use Play-Doh or alphabet magnets.
  - You can make sound soup by finding items around the house that begin with a particular sound and mixing them in a bowl together. All of these activities build your child's vocabulary and understanding of how words work. This will help them understand words when reading books, making reading easier and more enjoyable!
- **Any time spent sharing or talking about a book is beneficial, even if it's just a couple of minutes at a time.** If they have to close the book early because it's time for tea, or they're just losing interest, that's okay. Reading can take a lot of

mental energy and taking breaks gives children a chance to slowly build the mental stamina they need, so that soon they will be able to read for longer stretches of time.

- **Read yourself.** It doesn't matter what it is – pick up a newspaper or magazine, take a look at a cookery book, read a computer manual, enjoy some poetry or dive into a romance or detective novel. And get your children to join in – if you're cooking, could they read the recipe?
- **Visit the local library together.** It's always fun choosing new books to read, and keep an eye out for special author events at the library or local bookshops – children love meeting their favourite authors. Jacqueline Wilson and Anthony Horowitz always have signing queues that are miles long!
- **Keep reading together.** Just because your children are older, it doesn't mean you have to stop sharing stories – perhaps you could try the Harry Potter series or *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.