

KS2 Parent Guide to Reading, Writing and Spelling.

Some tips for home reading

- Establish a home reading routine. Read aloud with your children every day. Fifteen minutes for each child around a book of his/her choice. If you lack confidence in reading aloud, the fact that you are reading with your child is what matters. Share your excitement for reading and this will be the model your child will adopt.
- The reader holds the book! There is a lot of power and control in the world of reading. The reader needs to have the power.
- During home reading time, **turn off electronic devices** and give each child your undivided attention.
- If reading time is stressful, move the reading to a new location. Instead of sitting in the lounge, move to the bedroom floor, or go outside and sit under a tree or take the books to the local coffee shop.
- Find a reading time that works for your family. Limit the time and set the timer if reading in the past has always been difficult. It is better to have an enjoyable 15 minutes than a laborious 30 minutes where everyone is left feeling frustrated.
- At the end of the 15 minutes, ask questions that encourage discussion, for example: What was your favourite part? Tell me about the characters. What do you think will happen next? What did you think about that setting? What do like/ dislike about this book? There is no need to interrogate the reader. Make it a conversation as you would in a book club.
- Encourage your child to read independently. A bedside light is one of the best enticements for your child to read before going to sleep. After the 15 minutes of reading with you, the child can elect to continue reading independently.
- The less you interrupt the 15 minutes of reading, the more you are supporting the readers independence, resilience and confidence. Correct any mistakes that the child makes.
- Avoid judging your child's reading with words such as: 'good', 'excellent' or 'getting better'. Instead say things about the strategies your child uses when reading such as: 'I like how you read on when you came to that difficult word.' 'I like how you changed your voice to be the voice of the character in the story'. 'I noticed that you reread the bit that did not make sense.'

- If your child is reading independently and has reached the level of chapter books, it is not necessary for you to read aloud together any more. Your job is done. That is not to say, you cannot continue to share reading time because it is what you love to do as a family or that you sit and read silently together or that you talk about the books your child is reading because you are interested in his reading choices. Readers read differently in their heads as compared to reading aloud.
- Independent readers pick and choose what they read. They are entitled to read some and reject others. They are entitled to not complete books because they are boring. Readers make choices.
- Model what it means to be an enthusiastic reader. Create a home of readers where everyone reads – It is just what we do in this house! Talk about what you have read. Read aloud what makes you laugh and share it with your child .

What parents and carers can do (writing)

- Encourage children to write, write, write! Provide many opportunities such as writing the shopping list, sending letters and cards to friends and relations, writing emails, keeping a diary, publishing personal stories, labelling photos in the family album, and leaving notes. Writing should be relevant and meaningful rather than writing for the sake of writing.
- Give children opportunities to read their stories aloud (while you sit back and listen). Listen with a focus on the message they express. Comment on what they have done well, for example: 'I enjoyed how you used interesting words such as X, Y, Z.' 'The character you created seems so real. I can imagine how he looks.' Leave comments about spelling, punctuation, and grammar to another time — they are important if and when it is to be published.
- Draw children's attention to how writing is presented, for example, on brochures, billboards, books, and electronic media — these are models of writing for real purposes.
- Create a community of writers. Provide a quiet place for writing with lots of writing materials. Leave notes for each other, write poems for your children, and send messages in lunch containers. Play writing games, for example, one person writes the beginning, another the middle and the other the end of a family story. Write together.

What parents can do (spelling)

- Draw attention to words in the environment and in the books you read together, for example: *'Look at those two words ... they almost are identical except for the last letter'*; *'That word is really long'*; *'That word is French'*; *'That word has three syllables in it'*; *'Those two words rhyme'*.
- Play spelling games like Scrabble, crosswords, making words from number plates, letters in your names, words that can be spelled the same forward and backwards. Look for spelling apps that you can play together, for example, Boggle.
- Play word games like thinking of rhyming words, opposites, or words that sound like their meanings. The Internet has many fun and free spelling activities.
- Point out unusual words in the books you read together.
- Look for words in the environment.
- Show that you care about spelling. Ask: *'Who knows how to spell ...'* Say that you will write it down and take a look at it to see if it looks right.
- Children learn to spell by writing and noticing words when they read. Make reading and writing an integral part of your child's day.