

Reading

The importance of reading cannot be emphasised enough in young children and as parents it is important that you make every day reading a high priority.

Many studies show that toddlers and pre-schoolers who are read to every day have a larger vocabulary than those who aren't read to at all.

Not only does reading enhance a child's vocabulary, it also helps them understand how to read and write. Reading aloud to children also helps them to understand different topics about the world and every day life.

It is important that children learn to follow words across the page from left to right, and turn pages which are pre-reading skills that benefit children and help them to become better readers later on. Children who enjoy reading not only do better in language and literacy subjects, but in all of the different subjects as well.

While you may speak with your children every day, the vocabulary you use is often limited and repetitive. Reading books ensures that your child is exposed to vocabulary on different topics, which means they hear words or phrases which they may not hear otherwise in their day to day lives.

Reading is something that your child will learn to do during their first year at school. It is important that they have already been exposed to a range of books and are developing a love for reading. Visiting the library regularly will help your child develop their knowledge of how stories are structured, the types of books available, see print in different forms and most importantly know how to handle books carefully and have a love for books and reading.

Tips for reading with your child:

- **Set aside some time**—Find somewhere quiet without any distractions - turn off the TV/radio/computer.
- **Ask your child to choose a book**—Sharing books they have chosen shows you care what they think and that their opinion matters. This means they are more likely to engage with the book.
- **Sit close together**—Encourage your child to hold the book themselves and/or turn the pages.
- **Point to the pictures**—If there are illustrations, relate them to something your child knows. Ask them to describe the characters or situation or what will happen next. Encourage them to tell you the story by looking at the pictures.
- **Encourage your child to talk about the book**—Talking about the characters and their dilemmas helps children understand relationships and is an excellent way for you to get to know each other or discuss difficult issues. Give your child plenty of time to respond. Ask them what will happen next, how a character might be feeling or how the book makes them feel.

And lastly, above all - make it fun! - It doesn't matter how you read with a child, as long as you both enjoy the time together. Don't be afraid to use funny voices - children love this!

