

READING: LEARNING AT HOME

READING STAGES

Your children go through different stages as they learn to read. Remember that children learn in different ways and at different rates, so be patient and always encourage your children's efforts.

Role-play readers

As your children grow and develop, they begin to take an interest in books and the words they see around them.

They may start to imitate you by holding books the right way up, turning the pages carefully, and pretending to read by using the pictures and their memory to retell stories. They also learn the difference between the front and back of a book, understand that words and pictures are different, and that printed words contain messages.

You can support your children by:

- reading with them every day
- encouraging and praising any attempts at pretend reading
- showing them that pictures help tell the story
- reading their favourite stories again and again – familiarity builds confidence
- not criticising them when they make mistakes – learning to read takes time!

Experimental readers

During this stage, your children often read by looking at the pictures and using their memory of a story. They also recognise some words, but their focus is on the meaning of a text rather than reading every word properly.

You can support your children by:

- reading with them every day
- encouraging them to have a go at reading and praising their attempts
- talking with them about sounds, words and interesting features in books and other texts like labels, shopping lists and newspapers
- talking with them about book characters and storylines
- encouraging them to express opinions about what happens in a story
- continue reading their favourite stories again and again.

Turn off the television. It's easier for your children to concentrate when there are no distractions.



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Early readers

At this stage, children are able to read familiar texts. When they read new texts, they may read slowly and deliberately as they focus on each word, trying to read exactly what is on the page. Your children may also begin to tell you what they think about the things they have read and why they think it.

You can support your children by:

- reading to them often and encouraging them to talk about the story
- encouraging them to express opinions about the things they read
- pointing out and talking about common words

- encouraging them to try different ways to work out a word they don't know such as sounding out the word, using picture clues and other clues you give them, reading the sentence again, and reading on to the end of the sentence
- asking them about why they think something happened in a story, and why they think a character said or did something
- encouraging them to talk about how they worked out a word they didn't know
- writing notes on a message board for them to read and encouraging them to leave notes too.

It's really important to give your children lots of praise when they are learning to read. Avoid criticising if they get something wrong, even if it seems easy to you. Some children need lots of practise and encouragement.

