

# Helping your child with reading: 1

## Reading Aloud

[March 23, 2020nmackenz](#)

The following is the first in a series of 3 posts designed for parents who have children who are still learning how to read. The first thing to remember is that *the main aim is for children to want to read* – stress and anxiety or too much pressure can lead to children who *know how to read but choose not to read* because they associate reading with stress and failure.

‘emotions are **the primary gatekeepers** to learning.’ (OECD – 2017)

So . . . you can do a great deal to support your child as he or she is learning to read by:

- Reading **to** your child/ren;
- Reading **with** your child/ren; and
- Providing **support and encouragement for children to read by themselves.**

**I will expand on the first of these three points in this posting and the other two in their own posts.**

## Reading to your child/ren

A powerful, and sometimes underestimated way to support your child/ren as they are learning to read is to **continue to read to them** – every day. *When you read to your children you:*

- promote and foster a **love of reading**;
- develop **vocabulary and a knowledge** of book language and text forms;
- develop awareness of the **sounds, rhythms, and patterns** of language;
- **engage children in conversations about texts**;
- encourage children to **respond imaginatively** to a variety of texts;
- **build concentration**;
- promote oral **language development**;
- develop skills in **listening comprehension and critical thinking**;
- provide **opportunities for children to visualise** aspects of a text;
- help children to **develop effective strategies** for dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary and building meaning;
- support children who are **learning English**;
- create opportunities for **retelling and ideas for writing.**

Remember that reading aloud is a performance task so *ham it up, read with expression and make the book come to life. The children will love it.* Don't worry if you make the odd mistake – just show your child/ren how you fix up any mistakes you make. These become very important lessons in how even the best readers problem solve as they read.

**Consider asking an older sibling** to read to the younger members of the family sometimes. This is good practice for the older child/ren and the younger ones will love it.

Make time to read books that **can be enjoyed by multiple ages** if you have more than one child. Novels like Roald Dahl's, The BFG, or EB White's Charlotte's Webb, for example can be enjoyed by a range of age, but don't underestimate picture books. Many have complex stories and these are told by a combination of written words and visual images.

*... young children's brains respond to being read picture books in ways that are different to when they just listen to a story without pictures, or watch an animated story or cartoon. (Kamentz, 2018) Click below to read more.*

## [What's Going On In Your Child's Brain When You Read Them A Story?](#)

If you aren't sure what books are good to read aloud to your children contact the school or local library.

**“When someone reads aloud, they raise [the listener] to the level of the book. They give [the listener] reading, as a gift” (Pennac, p. 96).**

Pennac, D. (2006). *The rights of the reader*. London: Walker Books.

When you read aloud to your children you do the decoding work so that they can engage with the book in a way that they would not be able to do on their own.

You can supplement you reading aloud with **audio books** although they come second to the real thing.

The following TedX talk is by Rebecca Bellingham. **It is quite short and worth a listen.**

**N.B.** If you want to read more on this topic you might enjoy: Layne, S. (2015). *In Defense of Read-Aloud: Sustaining best practice*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

If you have found this post useful please comment and share the link to the blog with other families. The second in this series of posts will focus **Reading with your child/ren.**

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