



Types of Reading Support



Younger Children 0-4 Years: Familiarisation

Making time every day to read together with a child shows that reading is important. When reading with a pre-school child, it is useful to develop the habit of running your index finger under the line of print as you read. It's a simple procedure but a valuable one as it helps children to notice words, to make the connection between words and sounds and notice that words have meaning. The child also gains an awareness of the conventions of reading and how books work e.g. that some sentences may extend beyond a single line of print.

The language experiences that children have before they are six years old help form multiple and powerful brain connections. These connections are used for language and thinking. Without activities such as talking, singing and reading, the brain does not develop this network of connections.

Children Aged 4-6 Years: Encouragement

As young readers, children are essentially trying to interpret a book full of symbols. Patience during shared reading sessions will encourage them to be confident and will turn the process of learning to read into an adventure. The reading session becomes a bonding as well as a learning one.

Reading with a child for encouragement often involves repetition. A child may go through a period when they are particularly fascinated or fixated on one book or story. They may want it read to them night after night but it is not unusual for a child to favour a certain story. It may speak to the child's interests or emotional needs at a particular point in time.

Children should be offered a variety of stories, old and new, and read the stories they want to hear. If the child wants to hear the same book again and again, they should be encouraged. Re-reading familiar stories will give children reading confidence. It is crucial however that they are also offered different stories, as eventually they will be ready for new books.





Children Aged 6-9 Years: Exploration

Encouraging a child to read is a way of giving them the essential tools they'll need in life. The adults in a child's life can together help a child develop a lifelong relationship with books which will enrich their minds and their lives. In this exploration phase, the library becomes a very valuable resource, as children begin to appreciate it as a reading space, and as a communal space where they can interact with other readers. A family project could be undertaken on anything from history, geography, science or civics. This activity will mirror what children of this age are discovering in school; reading as an incredibly informative activity as well as enjoyable one.

Readers Aged 9-11 Years: Guidance

At this stage, reading with an older, more independent reader becomes a form of guidance to them. This is still active involvement but instead of reading together, the interaction between adult and child should take the form of discussion and debate. The interaction should move beyond the book and expand the child's vision of what a story can be, how it can affect them and the way they see the world. This stage is a time for new reading experiences, guided by the adult, as the child takes on more and more reading challenges.