



10 top tips on reading together

Remember that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to read with your child. Reading should be a fun activity – so relax and take the time to find whatever methods work best for you and your children. Here are some tips you could try:

1. Sometimes stop at key words or phrases and let your child say the word they know is coming next. Children are amazingly able to remember key words and phrases in books that are read over and over. Some young children can recite a whole book! Try an easy experiment. After reading the same book to a child several times, pause at key words or phrases and see if they can fill in the blanks.
2. Point to words as you read them. This can help your child recognise new letters and words, which will help as he or she learns to read. Make clear that it's ok if they ask you what words mean as you go along.
3. Talk about the story as you read. It's great to be interactive like this. Ask your child things (like what do they think might happen next, or why did a character do something). Give them a chance to ask questions too - and take time to answer.
4. Read slowly enough for your child to build mental pictures. When children listen to stories, they form pictures in their minds. If you read too fast, you stop your child 'seeing' what's happening. Think carefully about their age and development and read at the best speed.
5. Especially with younger children, focus on the 3 R's: Rhythm, Rhyme, and Repetition. Try to emphasise these elements in your reading – feel free to stress the first letters of words, slow down so the rhythm flows well, point out where sounds and words repeat. Babies and very young children are more likely to pay attention if you do!



10 top tips on reading together (continued)

6. Be an actor! Use different voices for different characters – this can be fun and make the story come to life. Try making different characters talk higher or deeper, faster or slower, or in different accents. If you have trouble thinking up voices, ask your child for ideas as to how a certain character might talk – they could even read one character's lines for you...
7. Let your child turn the pages. This encourages them to get involved in the reading process, and is also a good way for you to monitor how well they are able to follow the story.
8. Ask questions as you read, to give your child a chance to think about what might happen next, or to get a sense of how they are interpreting the action, or what they think of particular characters. Doing this can help your child feel part of the story, not just a 'sponge' soaking up words you throw at them. .
9. Especially if you're reading a 'chapter' book, take a minute to make sure you and your child can remember what's happened earlier. Don't worry if you burn up 'valuable reading time' doing this – making sure everyone is understanding the story is a very good way to get your brains working.
10. Try to finish each day's reading at an exciting point in the story. Most books are written with this in mind, so you can finish at the end of a chapter – but sometimes you could stop in the middle of a paragraph, just to shake things up a bit (and feel free to jump a page or two if sometimes you feel a section is dragging a bit!)