

Early Reading Skills

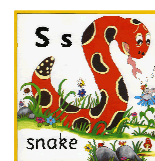
All children are different and there is no right or wrong time to start teaching a child to read, or set way to teach all children. There are however some basic ideas behind how children learn to read. The main skills that all children need to develop are pre-reading, phonics and word recognition.

Pre-reading skills



These are the skills children need in order to help them to become a reader. These skills are learnt during childhood at home and in the pre-school environment. If you talk to and read with your child regularly, you are already

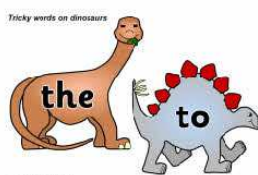
Phonics



Phonics are the distinct sounds that the letters of our alphabet make and it is important that all children develop the ability to distinguish distinct sounds. Children learn that words are made up of made up of sounds which can be assembled in different ways to make different words.



Word recognition



This is the learning of words by sight. These words cannot normally be read by sounding out the letters to form the words.

Reading books with your child will teach them how to handle books and will broaden their vocabulary. Having the opportunity for conversations with other children and adults will develop their language skills. The more experience children have of language the more easily they will learn to read.

Activities to help develop pre-reading skills

Read, recite and sing nursery rhymes. This promotes rhythm and allows your child to guess the rhyming words - a great confidence booster. For the same reasons read rhyming books and leave out the rhyming words for your child to complete.

Have a special place where books are kept, which is within your child's reach.

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Ask them to guess what the title of the book is or just by looking at the cover what the book is about. Follow the print with your finger when reading, so they learn the direction for reading.

Read to your child every night before they go to sleep - a great way to settle but also promotes a love of books.

Encourage your child to point out firstly the pictures and later the words. With older children ask them to point out the first word for you to read on each page. They will soon be using pictures as a clue to what the text is about and also know that print is read from left to right.

Visit the library.

Introduce letters and their sounds gradually - start with a letter that is important to your child, such as the initial of their name. Use the letter sounds not their names - "a for apple" not "ay for apple" - as these are much more useful when sounding out words to read.

Let your children see you reading. "Let's look in this recipe book to see what we need to make the cake. Oh look here it says 2 eggs, flour, butter and sugar".

Try not to answer all your children's questions for them, let them use books as a source of knowledge.

Talk to your child to develop their language skills and broaden their vocabulary - "Look at the dog, Mummy". "Yes, look what a big, hairy dog it is!"

Point out print in the environment, "Look that says Tesco, that's where we buy our food" or, "That sign says stop so mummy needs to stop her car here".