

# Learning Links' Tip Sheet

## How you can help your child read



Learning to read is closely linked with language growth and the best way to develop your child's language and reading abilities is to develop an interest and a positive attitude to reading in a relaxed home environment.

It is important not to place any demands on a child to develop any specific reading skills prior to entering school. At first we are most concerned with developing a positive attitude and love of reading.

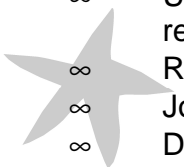
The '*read-to*' and '*read-with*' child has a better chance of being a good reader. He or she usually develops a positive attitude to reading, gains essential concepts about print, has a large vocabulary and a sense of language use and structure. These are important elements for school to build upon. Where they are lacking, the school must first establish them before they can teach a child to read.

Learning to read isn't easy, but it can be fun! The only short cuts to successful reading are plenty of enjoyable experiences with reading and patience.

Parents can develop children's confidence in their own abilities by providing genuine praise for achievement, supporting their child in changing situations and offering understanding in difficult ones.

Here are some ideas to help your child develop an interest in reading.

- ∞ Read your child's story books aloud.
- ∞ Allow your child to handle and care for books.
- ∞ Use reading as a tool for communication in the home; for example, notes on the refrigerator, bulletin / boards, etc.
- ∞ Read letters received to children.
- ∞ Join the local library and go there as a family.
- ∞ Display, at all times, a positive attitude that reading is important and pleasurable.
- ∞ Read yourself, and be seen to be reading by your children.
- ∞ Tell children why you are reading or what you learnt while reading.
- ∞ Read to your child and with your child.



- ∞ Read 'incidental' materials such as labels on groceries; notice boards; letters and greeting cards; recipes; gardening instructions; instructions; maps and street directories; shop signs; T.V. commercials and captions and newspapers and magazines.
- ∞ Provide a variety of materials at suitable interest and development levels. Many are published as inexpensive paperbacks.
- ∞ Give books as a reward for a job well done or as a gift and buy your child a bed lamp and use that special time before lights out for reading.
- ∞ Read number plates on cars, making words from the combination of letters.
- ∞ Read signs such as railway stations; shopfronts; directions and distances; posters and billboards.

### **Talk and listen**

- ∞ Listen to children's talk and allow time for talk, especially at meal times.
- ∞ Discuss family interests and problems.
- ∞ Plan activities together as families/individuals.
- ∞ Discuss newspaper items, current affairs and books.
- ∞ Select television programs together and talk about the good and bad points.
- ∞ Listen to singing, music, radio, CDs or DVDs.


### **Write**

- ∞ Write to children, with children and for children. Write messages; letters and cards to relatives and friends; and labels in diaries. You can also write a diary or make simple books, dictated by the child in the child's own language, from experiences shared together. You and your child can then illustrate them with drawings and photographs.

### **Play**

- ∞ Indoor games, like Snakes and Ladders, Ludo, Lotto (and later, do crosswords, play Junior Scrabble)
- ∞ Party games like Hunt the Peanut and Treasure Hunt. Provide large, clear, written instructions to be read (out loud by the adult) and followed.

Many of the familiar "old fashioned" parlour games (e.g. Snap, Snakes and Ladders, Dominoes, etc.) nursery stories and rhymes, help children develop visual and auditory discrimination, motor control, memory, sequencing, and logic. Toys children enjoy most are useful for a variety of purposes which stimulate the imagination. They need not be currently fashionable.



*The information in Learning Links' Tip Sheets is prepared by experienced early childhood professionals. Each child is unique and this material is not necessarily suitable for every child, parent or carer. We recommend you discuss this information with your child's therapist or education professional prior to using these tips.*