

Encouraging Speaking & Listening

Reading and Writing

How to encourage your child to read

Read yourself! Show a good example by talking about the reading you do at work and at home. Let your child know that reading is an important part of your life.

Keep books safe. Make your child their own special place to keep their books in their bedroom.

Visit your library - it's free to join! As well as taking out story books, use visits to the library as a time to find books and CD ROMs about your child's hobbies and interests.

Make time to read. Set aside a time for reading for the family - after school or before bedtime. Encourage independent reading but don't be afraid to still tell a bedtime story.

Don't just read books. Encourage your child to read newspapers, TV guides, comics and magazines. Ask your child to find out information from the Yellow Pages, the Internet, cookery books, etc.

Let your child read with younger children. Encourage them to read to other members of the family.

Keep in touch with school. Make sure your child swaps their home reading books regularly at school and try to make a regular time slot of about 10 minutes to hear them read.

If English is not your family's first language: You can buy dual language books. You can talk about books and stories in any language.

How to help with reading

Be positive! Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's all right to make mistakes.

Give them time. Let them make a guess before you tell them the word. Let them read to the end of the line before correcting their mistakes. It doesn't matter if you have to tell them the word sometimes.

Spot words inside words. Help them to spot words they know within larger more complicated words.

Let them read their favourites. Don't worry if they only read one kind of book. If they are really stuck, ask the librarian or teacher to suggest something else they might like.

Make the story come to life. Encourage your child to read with expression. This will help them read more fluently.

Ask lots of questions about the story. What would you have done if you were.....? Does this book remind you of any thing that has happened to you? Can you guess what is going to happen next?

Use a dictionary. Buy a simple dictionary and use it to check the meanings of new words.

At Holy Trinity, 'Literacy' is made up of several elements.

A typical lesson may include:

- speaking and listening - discussing a topic as a class, table or pair; giving an opinion; explaining something
- reading - individually, as a group or shared as a class; responding to the text; comprehension questions,

- writing - sentences; paragraphs; stories; poems; plays and non fiction texts

It will really help your child make progress in school if you can support the learning they do in school, at home.

In this leaflet there are some ideas for helping your child, depending on their age and development. Obviously, you know your child best and it may be appropriate to look at a different section to the one for your child's actual age.

❖ **Around the age of seven**

A seven year old is at the perfect age to take new things in very quickly. They will have learnt a lot about how to listen and ask for help if they don't understand. They can tell you stories, ask you 'why', use exciting language and take turns with their friends.

Hear it, get it

A seven year old can listen to you when you ask a question or give them an instruction and work out which bits of information are important. They know when they don't understand and can ask you to explain, for example "Is the author the one that writes the story and the pictures are done by someone else?" Your seven year old can understand instructions with two or three parts that are more complicated, for example "Choose a person from the story we've just read, tell me how they feel at the end of the story and why you think that is."

Play a game

Get a list of words from a topic your child is learning at school.

Choose one word and challenge you child to say it in a sentence. Does it make sense?

Story telling

Choose a story you both know well, for example Red Riding Hood. Talk about the wolf. Is he good or bad? Ask your child to say why they think he is good or bad. What's in the story that tells them?

Words up

A seven year old is learning lots of new words and can put words together by meaning as well as how they sound and look.

Your child is learning to compare words in different ways, by look, sound and meaning, for example "Bare and bear sound the same but they mean different things."

They can guess words when given clues like shape, size and letters, for example "It's a large animal, grey with thick skin, not an elephant and it starts with the letter 'h'."

Your seven year old will enjoy using new words they're learning and telling you what they mean, for example "symmetry is when you draw a line down a shape and it's the same on each side."

Play word games

There are lots of games to play with your child. Here are some examples,

- opposites, say a word and then think of the opposite, for example hot, cold
- the yes/no game, challenge your child do talk to you without using yes or no, it's quite hard to do!

- describing word charades, your child thinks of an action, for example swimming, adds a describing word, for example slowly and acts it out for you to guess.

Say it loud and proud

When your seven-year-old speaks they are easy to understand most of the time. Sometimes they will make mistakes with longer words. They know lots of sounds and words which are important for reading and spelling. They will be joining sounds together to read words they don't know yet.

Your child will enjoy finding rhymes, for example happy/snappy and can count the syllables in long words, for example Cat-er-pill-ar.

Seven year olds love asking questions to find things out and will use 'how' and 'why' a lot! For example "How do we know the burglar can't get in?", "Why is the sky blue?"

They will be trying out new words, like descriptive words, for example "He saw a huge, hairy dog coming at him."

They will also be able to use more grown up language to explain events, for example "It was scary because the man with the dog looked worried, so we ran away."

Play "connecting" with your child - make a list of connecting words, for example now, next, because, etc. and challenge your child to use each one in a longer sentence, for example "The children ran away because the bear was chasing them."

Tell me a story

A seven year old will love telling you stories about things they are doing. They can give you more detail about what happened.

Your child's stories will be getting better as they can tell you a basic story plot, use words that make it interesting and get it in the right order most of the time.

Your child will know what you already know and will check they've got it right while telling you a story, for example "You know Mr Jones, he's our teacher, well he wasn't in school today..."

They will be able to say what they think will happen next in a story, for example "I think the hungry fox is going to try and eat the chicken but he won't be able to catch him."

Tell a story with your child. You each say a sentence in turn to keep the story going. Can they remember the events and keep the plot going?

Chatting and mixing

Your child is getting better and better at mixing with others and making friends. They will take turns to talk and listen in a conversation and will talk about things other people like, not just about themselves. Sometimes they will still talk too much but you can let them know that others need their turn to talk.

The child will use language when they play to make games more exciting, e.g. "To infinity and beyond!" They will be able to exaggerate to make games and stories more interesting, e.g. "We're making the biggest sandcastle in the world, it's as big as a tall tree."

A seven year old will now be using language they hear from other people. They are beginning to see the need to use

different styles with different people, e.g. to a teacher, "It's really good," to a friend, "It's wicked."

- Look: Is your child joining in with other children and taking turns in a group?
- Listen: Does your child use different language with different people?

Around the age of nine.....

By the age of 9 a child knows the rules of talking and is using this to mix with others and build friendships. They can tell exciting stories with a beginning, middle and end and are starting to use this in their writing. The words they know and use are helping them to think and learn.

Hear it, follow it, get it

A 9 year old can listen to you and work out which bits of information are important. They can also read your mood to understand what you're NOT saying, e.g. "I said dinner is on the table!" [Mum's getting cross so we'd better go to the table now]

If they don't understand your 9 year old can ask for the information they need from you but be patient, they will need time to think first.

Quiz me - do quizzes with your child where you say a sentence and they have to tell you what they can guess from what you say, e.g. I need my umbrella - what am I not telling you?

Words up

A 9 year old can talk about events using time and measurement,

e.g. "Next Friday we're going to Granny's house and the train will take one hour." They can use words to describe actions and their effects, e.g. "If I don't take my coat to school I'll be cold because there is frost on the road this morning". They are learning and using new words that are linked to different subjects, e.g. "That goal was not allowed because their team had a man offside".

Shape spotting - when you are out and about get your child to look for unusual shapes, can they name them and say what they know about them, e.g. an octagon has 8 sides, like an octopus has 8 legs

Say it loud and proud

A 9 year old speaks clearly and fluently about past, present and future events. They don't often make mistakes when reading or speaking unusual word endings, e.g. brought, fish, peace.

The child will be using their voice to explain their meaning, e.g. "Helpful?" she cried, "you must be joking!"

They will be using longer, more complicated sentences to plan and explain their thoughts, e.g. "We decided Jenny will run first because she's fast and will give us a good start, me and Jack will go in the middle and Waleed will go last because he is really sporty."

Planning - ask your child to help you to plan a party or an event and talk to you about what needs to be done, e.g. a brother/sister's birthday party.

Tell me a story

A 9 year old is able to tell good, exciting stories that have a clear beginning, an interesting middle and an ending. They are using their voices to make their stories come to life and changing the information they give depending on who they are talking to.

The child can relate what they tell to the interests of the listener, e.g. "Guess who I saw yesterday..."

Telling stories - get your child to make up stories to tell you and other people in the family, especially younger brothers or sisters.

Chatting and mixing

Your 9 year old knows when to talk and when to listen. They can change what they say to fit the situation, sometimes giving less detail sometimes more. They know some situations when they need to use formal language, e.g. showing a visitor around the school.

Your child can keep conversations going with different people by asking questions and making comments. With their friends they are now using different types of chat which help them get along well and have good friendships, e.g. "I like your scarf" (compliments), "Don't be rude to Taryn" (criticising), "I don't like playing that game", (clarifying), "Why don't we play with Anna today?" (negotiating).

- Look - Is your child happy in a group of friends and able to mix and play with them well?

- Listen - Does your child talk in the right way to different people or do they sometimes seem rude?

By eleven years

By the age of 11 your child is good at listening and is using language fully in lots of different ways to explain, describe and share. They share ideas and information to help their thinking and learning. They have good friendships which are independent of you.

Hear it, follow it, get it

Your 11 year old can listen for longer and notice HOW things are said. They get sarcasm when it's obvious, e.g. "My favourite cup, broken, now that was really clever!"

Your child has a sense of humour and gets simple jokes even if they can't explain why they are funny.

Your 11 year old knows there are different kinds of questions, e.g. open questions - "Tell me about your day"
closed questions - "Did you have a good day?"
rhetorical questions - "Wasn't your day great!"

Question time - get your child to ask you the same question in different ways, e.g. "What shall we go and see at the cinema?", open, "Can we go to the cinema?", closed, "It would be fun to go to the cinema wouldn't it?" rhetorical.

You're joking! - share jokes and funny stories with your child

Homework help - work with your child to make lists of words for their school topics and use a dictionary together to find out their meanings.

Talk to your child as you would another adult using 'grown up' language.

Grammar rules - ask your child to tell you basic grammar rules and give examples. If they have younger siblings encourage them to find a simple way to explain sentences to them too.

Tell me a story

Story telling is important to your 11 year old for their school work and for their friendships. Your child can tell you long and entertaining stories full of detail and description. They can put sub-plots into their stories and then return to the main story line.

Your 11 year old can talk in detail about things that have happened some time ago or are planned for the future.

Play story detectives - ask your child to tell you about the books they are reading or the TV programmes they are watching. Can they say what will happen in the next chapter/episode and can they say why they know this?

- Look - Can your child organise a game with a group of friends and explain the rules so everyone can understand.
- Listen - Is your child able to talk through arguments and problems when they come up and find a way to make it work.

Any concerns?

Remember all children are different and they develop at different rates. Chances are your child can do **some** of the things mentioned for their age but are still developing others. This is normal.

If you are at all concerned about your child's speaking and listening, reading, or writing development you should first talk to their teacher. There are a number of reasons why your child may not be keeping up with the other children in their year and it is important you discuss this with their teacher.

We hope this information has been helpful and we are grateful to the National Literacy Trust for much of the advice.

Elisabeth Broers - May 2012