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# Stratosphere.

The newsletter about learning!  
How to help your child really take off!

ACTIVE LEARNING:  
DOING / THINKING / UNDERSTANDING

## Reading

Remember to read with children and have fun. A little and often is better than one long session! Sessions are not a test, so don't turn them into a test situation!

"Come and read with me." is better than "Come and read to me."

May we encourage you to write in your child's Reading Record. We love to read your comments but more importantly so does your child. Older children are very welcome to write their own comments.

At our school we believe the development of secure reading skills, especially phonological awareness, word building and comprehension, underpin all areas of learning.

We understand it is our responsibility to teach the reading skills mentioned above, but we also acknowledge that parents play an important role in hearing their child read. Your involvement, support and encouragement make a huge impact on your child as a reader.

We feel and research has shown that it is very important for a child to become familiar with the book they are reading. To achieve familiarity, a child needs to read the book on **3 different occasions**.

1. **Instructional** - When a new book is given it is at an instructional level. This means the book may have some new, unfamiliar words or new punctuation that will require teaching and is a great opportunity to share the book with the child. The adult can read the book to the child and demonstrate how it should be read as well as the child having a go at reading it. It is also a time to talk about what is happening in the book to help the child's understanding.
2. **Practice** - The child needs to practice reading the book and not simply memorise it. They may need support to do this. Allow the child time to try out different strategies to read new or unfamiliar words. If they seem completely 'stuck' then tell them the word and quickly let them carry on.
3. **Familiar** - The child should be able to read the book independently and comfortably, as it is familiar to them. It is important to listen for good phrasing of words, smooth reading and use of punctuation. At this stage, only step in and help them with a word after they have tried themselves.

Therefore reading books are changed a maximum of **twice** a week. The book should then be familiar to the child. We feel a book has been "read" when a child can:

- read the words **smoothly**
- acknowledge punctuation e.g. pause at a full stop, raised voice for questions
- understand the key points through talking about the book.

The reading journey is not a race. Every child will reach their destination in their own particular way. Every child will travel through each "stage" at their own pace:

- **Beginners** - Reading picture books, recognising keywords, putting keywords into sentences and word games.
- **Emergent** - Reading books which have repetitive language and feature familiar settings and situations. These also help develop comprehension.
- **Developing** - "Guided free-readers". The child will choose a book from a given selection (e.g. Happy Families, Animal Crackers, Horrid Henry). Sometimes the child will read to themselves as well as to an adult. They will be encouraged to talk about what they have read to ensure understanding.
- **Independent** - "Free-readers". They are able to make their own book choices and are expected to take more responsibility for their reading. They maybe encouraged to try a range of genres. Children will be able to demonstrate comprehension in guided reading sessions and book discussions.

*On a final note...*

**Our aim is to promote reading as a valuable and enjoyable experience. Remember the reading journey is not a race. Your child, with encouragement from you, will reach their destination in their own particular way. The amount of support that they need will vary as they travel on the road to independence. Undue pressure and anxiety is detrimental- your child will pick up 'the vibes'. Send out positive messages about reading and your child will make progress. They will also derive pleasure from this activity as they venture into the magical world of books.**

**Remember get the foundations in place - it is important to spend time putting the basics in place for the future. Mix reading material up. Racing through the scheme, is in many cases, counter productive in the long term!**

