



Involving parents in encouraging their children to read

Try involving the parents in coming up with their own suggestions for how to encourage their child to love reading at home as well as at school. A useful, non-threatening approach is to have a sorting activity with a number of suggestions on separate pieces of cards like the ones below. Provide a few blank cards and encourage the parents to add in any additional ideas. To ensure that the choices are appropriate for your school, you could devise these with some of your parent ambassadors, translating them if necessary. Once you have established this approach with one year, you can then ask each new intake of parents to review the approach and come up with revised guidelines that they have been involved in developing.

The parents, in small groups, could decide which they think are the most useful. Then get the groups to discuss their ideas together and co-construct the setting's guidance for parents on helping their child love reading.

Once the parents have made their selection, this can help you select which aspects to focus on and whether the setting needs to consider what support it can offer. For example, you might want to set up sessions where you model sharing books with a child including looking at the pictures and trying to work out what the story could be about.

Depending on what the parents have chosen, concentrate your support on helping them establish these practices within the home using your parent ambassadors to support you.

If you know that some of your children's families are not confident readers themselves, it's a good idea to be aware of what resources there are in the area to support them. Find out what your local library and children's centre offers and try to find out what family literacy/literacy support there is.

One of the bright spots within the new curriculum in England is its focus on encouraging children to read widely for pleasure. Every primary school should have a strategy for doing this that involves the children's families.

Card-sorting activity to help parents support their children in loving reading

Useful	Not so useful
Play reading - encourage your child to play at reading before they can read words	
Play reading games when you are on public transport or at the supermarket	
Set up a regular time for reading - bedtime is excellent.	
Make certain your children see you reading books, magazines, the computer etc and have books and magazines in different rooms.	
Make reading fun and positive - praise your child. Don't force them to read when they don't want to.	
Join your local library - borrow books for you and your children and find out what support they offer.	
Begin any book you are sharing with your child by looking through it at the pictures and asking questions about what might happen.	
Encourage your child to hear any story they love repeatedly or re-read it on their own. This helps them remember language patterns.	
If English isn't your home language, have books and magazines in your own language as well as in English. You can borrow dual language books from your local library or children's centre.	
Help your child find books at the library that will interest them. Where possible, get your child to choose the book they want to borrow.	