

Help Your Child with Reading

Reread

Reread your child's favourite stories as many times as your child wants to hear them. Choose books and authors that your child enjoys.



Look

Look at the pictures and talk about them. For example, 'Can you find a bird or a cat?', 'What else can you see?', 'What are the children playing? Have you played that before?'



Talk

To help your child develop their vocabulary, talk to your child as much as possible about what you are doing. Ask them about their day. What have they been doing? What was their favourite thing? What games did you play today?

Visit

Visit the local library together. It is fun choosing new books to read. Keep an eye out for special story events at the library or local bookshops that you can join in with.



Sit

Sit close together and get comfy! You could encourage your child to hold the book themselves and turn the pages. Use funny voices, puppets or props to bring the story alive.

Ask Questions

Ask questions when you are reading together, such as 'What can you see on this page?', 'How do you think the characters feel?' and 'What is the story about?'



Storytelling Tin

Make a storytelling tin. Collect together a group of objects with a story theme. Open the tin and explore the objects inside. Your child can choose a character, talk about where the story will be and think about what might happen. Have fun making up a story with the objects from the tin.



Story Sacks

A story sack is a great way to get your child talking about a story. They are bags that contain the story itself, alongside a variety of items linked to the story. It could be the story CD, a related non-fiction book, puppets, models or objects that are in the story and a related activity.



Encourage

Encourage family and friends to share books with your child. The more your child sees you and others reading, the more they will want to read too.



Help Your Child with Writing

Playdough

Playdough is a great finger-strengthening activity. Add cutters and tools, theme it with a story or practise moulding letters.



Writing Letters

Writing letters in sand, water or paint (or on whiteboards and chalkboards) is a great way to practise letter formation. Start with the letters from your child's name and move on to initial sounds.

Drawing

Drawing is a very good entry point for handwriting as it gives children an opportunity to practise guiding a pencil. They can follow a simple guide or use their imagination to draw.



Fine Motor

Fine motor and hand-eye coordination will develop through lots of activities that use pinching, grasping, twisting, threading, squashing and squeezing. Activities, such as threading, weaving and manipulating small items with tweezers will all help build fine motor control.

Go Shopping

Go shopping and let your child write a small part of your shopping list. Give your child the list while you are there for them to find the items and add them to the trolley. You might help them to form the letters or write it together so it gives meaning to making marks.



Sensory

Sensory opportunities are an excellent way to make writing fun and exciting. You could squirt shaving foam onto a smooth surface and add some paint in colours linked to a theme, such as seasons, rainbows or under the sea. Children can spread the shaving foam and mix it with the paint. They can make marks in the shaving foam with their fingers or with paintbrushes. Provide letters or patterns for your child to copy.



Scissor Skills



Scissor skills help to develop fine motor muscles. Have long strips of paper available and draw a mixture of pattern lines on them (wavy, zigzag, straight). Invite children to cut along the lines to complete the pattern.

Mark Making

Making marks is often where early writing starts. Encourage mark making in natural materials, such as mud, sand or snow. Children can use a variety of tools to make marks, such as brushes, sticks and feathers. Pattern books can also be fun to do and allow children to practise mark making.



Strengthen Fingers

Strengthen fingers by using a pestle and mortar in the garden. Collect things in the garden and break them down using the pestle and mortar; talk about the smells and the changes as it breaks down. Try some spices from the kitchen too.



Help Your Child with Maths

Counting

Practise counting out objects, such as buttons, toys or sticks collected on a walk. Encourage your child to point to each object as they say the number name.



Songs and Rhymes

Songs and rhymes are great for helping young children learn to count. Focus on numbers 1-5 and then 1-10. Try 'Five Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day' and '1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive'.



Matching

Dominoes can be a great way to understand that a number refers to an amount of objects. Matching games can also help your child to understand 1:1 correspondence.

Talk

Talk to children about the different uses of numbers. Talk about numbers you see all around you. For example, 'Look, there are three cats on the wall' or, 'Can you see the number 5 on the gate?' Play games and talk about the numbers on the dice (board games are great for this).

Cooking

Measure ingredients and bake something yummy together and set the timer for it to cook.



Number Spotting

Try and spot numbers wherever you go – on a menu at a cafe, on the bus, at the shops or people's front doors on a walk.



Shapes

Understanding shape helps us to make sense of the world around us. Go on a shape hunt around your house. See if you can find circles, squares, rectangles or triangles.

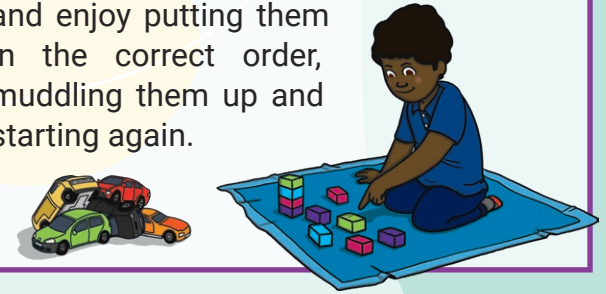
Sorting

Anything can be sorted into groups! Sorting objects into sets of things with similar characteristics is important for beginning to understand what things have in common. This could be snacks, buttons or toys and can be extended to talk about how many are in each group. You could ask, 'Which has more? Which has less? Let's count and check!'



Ordering Numbers

Once your child has become familiar with counting then they can start ordering numbers. You could label blocks, cars or dinosaurs with numbers 1-5 then 1-10 and enjoy putting them in the correct order, muddling them up and starting again.



Every Day

Do maths every day! You might not think it but you will be doing maths every day. Helping your child get dressed, going to the shops, singing counting songs, counting the steps on the stairs, following a daily routine – most activities we do with our child involve maths.

Play

Play with objects, such as shells, bottle tops, beads or building blocks. These can be sorted into sets, used to make simple patterns or pictures (like a face or boat) or used to prompt discussions about shape.

