

Top tips to establish the habit of reading and reading for pleasure:

- **The key is finding 'The Right Book'** - Every time your child reads something boring, too challenging or too easy, they will be put off. By contrast, a single book can transform the experience of reading for a child. If it is a book that they enjoy so much that they can't put it down, it can open the door to a whole series, or genre, allowing the reading habit to be established. Finding that right book takes time. It may involve going to a specialist bookshop, speaking to the class teacher, or your child's peers, reading online reviews etc.
- **Reading does not always have to involve a book** - Reading should be an integral part of everyday life. It may be newspapers, magazines, comics, instructions to a game, road signs, a TV guide or the back of a cereal packet. Just ensure that they have access to a full range of genres and if possible equal amounts of fiction and non-fiction.
- **Parents act as a role model for their children** - Make sure they see you reading regularly. Make a 'family reading time' at the weekend where everyone sits together and reads their own thing. Offer to read your favourite book to a class when invited into school. Children need to see that reading is an enjoyable and worthwhile thing to do.
- **Read aloud to your children** - Even if they are confident, independent readers, nearly everyone enjoys being read to. With older children it gives you an opportunity to discuss what they are reading and ensure that their comprehension is solid.
- **Make time for reading** - Don't overload your children with too many activities. By the time they have been to after-school clubs, had dinner, a bath, music practice, completed their homework, a bit of down time etc. they fall into bed exhausted and have very little time to read. 10 minutes a night doesn't really allow you to 'get into' a book. Longer periods of uninterrupted time such as weekends or school holidays are a more productive time for reading.
- **Praise/feedback** - Get into the habit of telling children what they have done right instead of what they have done wrong e.g. "I liked the way you used expression" or "You worked out that difficult word all by yourself". This is far more motivating. Don't correct every mistake. When children are corrected too much, they are scared to try for themselves and become frustrated or lacking in confidence.
- **Introduce the book** - Books must be introduced, presented, talked about and savoured together. Do some research, look at reviews, websites with book suggestions and explain why you think it will appeal to the child.
- **Reviews** - For children hooked on books, encourage them to exchange ideas on what they thought about a book, reflect, and be critical. Encourage them to bring a book from home and share it with the class with a written book review. Suggest that they write a letter to their favourite author. Many authors have their own websites or forums to write book reviews. Respect your child's opinions and tastes without banning certain books that they will just cling to more fiercely.
- **Take turns reading** - This gives children a break and an example to emulate. Break up the character parts so you can take turns to read. You read one page and they read one. Read for a few minutes until you get to a very exciting bit and then ask them to continue and tell you what happens next.
- **Comprehension** - Talk about what you read together and what they read independently. How the child thinks a character is feeling, what they would do in that situation, what is going to happen next, retell the sequence of events and work on inference.