

Supporting Reading at Home

Before you read:

- Look at the front cover. Discuss it with your child. What do you see? What clues is it giving us as to what this book might be about?
- Read the title. Read the author and the illustrator's name.
- Look at the back cover, and read the blurb.
- Make a prediction! What do you think the book may be about?
- Make a connection! Do you know anything about the topic of this book? Do you know anyone who could be a little like any of the characters?

While you are reading:

- Ask your child to show you where to start reading. If they're not sure, gently guide their attention to the text at the top left hand side.
- Draw your child's attention to the full stop. What does it mean? When do we use it? Occasionally give them the job of showing you where to stop for breath (understanding punctuation is one of the basic concepts about print that will support later success).
- If you are reading to your child, give your child the job of page turner as this helps develop simple motor skills and confidence in book handling.
- Model reading. You may use your finger to follow the words as you read. You may even try to sound out a word, with the child's help.
- Pause throughout the story. Discuss the pictures, the characters, the unfolding story line - but don't slow down so much that the flow of the story is interrupted.
 - You could ask your child to recall what has happened so far.
 - Ask your child to predict what may happen next.
 - Ask your child to share their thoughts about the book - is it happy, scary, exciting?

After you read:

- Discuss the story..
- Encourage your child to express their opinion about the book. If they didn't like it, that's ok! But ask them to explain what they didn't like.
- Talk about who your favourite characters were, or what their favourite part was.
- Make a connection - see if you can connect this to your own life, or to another book.

Choice

Let your child choose the story they want to read or have read to them. Providing choice is a great way to keep your child interested and engaged in reading. It can also be a nice experience to share your favourite books from childhood.

Read with expression

Use different voices for the various characters or share the characters between yourself and your child/children. A dramatic reading can be a fun way to read a book as a family.

Read for an audience!

Encourage children to read to younger siblings or record your child reading a familiar story to send as a video to a friend or relative (this is a nice one to send on to grandparents who may be missing their grandchildren).

I wonder..

Ask open-ended questions; questions to which there is no right or wrong answer, but which stimulate thinking, talk and discussion. "I wonder" questions can be thought-provoking.

Different languages

When reading a simple story in English, encourage your child to share any words they know in the story as Gaeilge, or in another language that they may speak.

Characters

Encourage your child to think about the characters, their feelings, why they might have acted the way they did and any changes they would make to the story. By practicing this aloud, you are cultivating your child's imagination.

Art

Art is a great way for children to engage with their reading. Children can draw pictures of their favourite characters or part of a story.

Make a connection

Encourage your child to make connections with the book. They may be able to connect the story to some aspect of their own life or another book.!

Again and again and..

With younger or developing readers, one good read deserves another. Re-reading a book/story several times develops fluency and faster processing of words. Think of it like practicing a piece of music.