

### Supporting your child at home

**Reading to an adult at home is a great way for your child to practise what they have learned at school. By listening to your child read for just 5-10 minutes, four times a week, you will help your child become a happy and confident reader. Reading at home should be a successful and positive experience for your child. If it is turning into a very stressful time, please do consult your child's class teacher for advice.**

#### **Why do we need to do reading at home?**

Children need a lot of practice to develop their reading skills to the point of fluency. Listening to your child read at home provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate how to apply their letter-sound knowledge to reading simple text.

#### **What kind of readers will my child bring home and why?**

The readers that your child will bring home will mainly contain words that they can 'sound out'. You will notice that the vocabulary in these books is very controlled. This is because at this early stage of the reading process, words need to follow regular sound-symbol patterns (e.g., dog, fan, sheep) so that children are given the opportunities to work out the words for themselves, with your support. Of course, some words are a little irregular or 'tricky' (e.g., are, said). These very useful 'exception' words cannot be sounded out in the usual way and should be previewed before reading the book or simply provided when encountered. Books can be read several times to build confidence and fluency.

#### **How should I support my child when reading at home?**

Your child should spend 5-10 minutes reading with you, four times a week. Follow the procedures set out in the MiniLit Sage Home Reading Diary. Take time to introduce the book and preview any difficult words. When your child gets stuck on a word, encourage him/her to have a go at sounding out the word. If necessary, demonstrate what this looks like first. Remember to praise with abundance when your child is successful at working out a word or when your child goes back to have another go. You should not encourage your child to 'guess' a word or use the picture to help them. Rather, keep their focus on the letters and sounds, providing as much support as necessary. Learning to read initially requires a lot of effort for many children and at this early stage patience is required! It is important to build up confidence and allow them to enjoy success.

If your child stumbles over a tricky word that can't be sounded out, simply give him/her the word and ask him/her to repeat it. Tricky words can be practised at home, using the words in the MiniLit Sage Home Reading Diary. Only practise words that have already been taught at school.

Check that your child has understood what has been read. Once your child is reading more confidently, encourage him/her to think about comprehension and to self-correct if something does not make sense.

#### **When is the best time to do home reading?**

Provide a quiet place at home with no distractions so both you and your child can focus on the task at hand. It is a good idea to provide a rest or snack immediately after school, before starting the home reading session so that your child is well rested and fresh. Try not to rush the session or leave it too late in the day. Creating a positive reading experience is vital.

#### **What else can I do to support my child at home?**

There will be many, many informal opportunities to develop your child's oral language and reading skills at home. This work can be done in your home language (in the case of bilingual homes) as well as in English. Talk to your child, using interesting vocabulary. Explain new words. Join a local library and borrow books to read to your child. Talk about the stories you read to your child, providing a good model.

Restrict screen time and replace it with opportunities to develop oral language. Help develop your child's curiosity about language and the sounds within words by playing word and sound games, e.g., I spy or reciting nursery rhymes. As the year progresses, practise the tricky words they have learned. The most important thing is to keep it light and playful but purposeful.