



# Thomas Russell Infants' School

'Our children blossom through nurture and challenge'

## Reading Information session

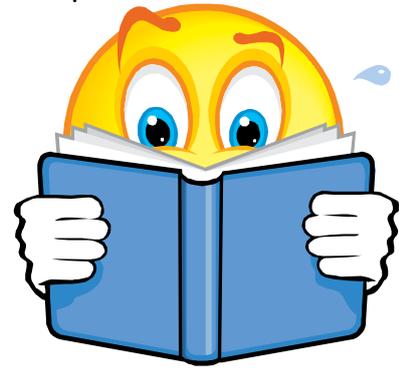


# Reading with your child at home.

Reading with your child at home can easily become very stressful if it is not handled correctly. It can cause great frustration if you feel that your child is not learning to read as fast as you expect.

It should be an enjoyable stress free experience for both of you, so if you find things are getting tense during a reading session the best advice is to stop and come back to the book later on.

If your child cannot read a word within a second or two then just tell them the word and move on with the story. This goes against most parents' instincts, but is the only way for the two of you to get on with the book and enjoy the story. When you read the book again the following evening, you will find that your child remembers more of the 'difficult' words you had to supply, and will improve each evening. The important thing is that your child is learning to be confident that you will always tell them a word which they do not know, and can trust that reading with you will be a pleasurable experience.



Unfortunately, the alternative scenario is all too well-known to us all: your child sees a difficult word, tenses up and makes a frantic effort to work it out. Meanwhile, you also tense up, feeling that your child will never learn to read!

Because of the history of the English spelling system, which has grown from lots of different sources, many words are impossible to work out from the sounds of their letters.



'Cat' is straightforward, as are 'log', 'hit', and 'get'. But what about words like 'though'? The spelling has no resemblance to the actual word that we say, and no-one can possibly know what the word says unless they are told. No-one can work out how to read words like 'said', 'early', 'was', 'phone' and thousands more from the sounds of their letters. Unfortunately we have inherited a highly irregular spelling system which we are stuck with!

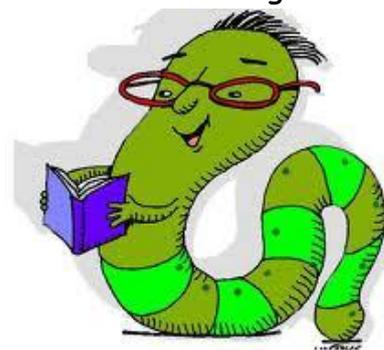
However, with the growing confidence that you will always tell them a word they do not know, children **do** learn to read. You will notice them using other clues, like the pictures on the page, or guesses from the meaning of the sentence, and it is good to encourage them to use these clues. Provided that they have the opportunity to go over the same book on different evenings, they will gradually come to learn the new words in it, and to enjoy the story - which is what reading

is all about!

Another simple method to make things easier is to share the reading with your child: read one sentence each (while still coming in straight away with any difficult words for your child). This will teach your child to look out for the next period/full stop, and will help them get an idea of what a sentence is.

Repetition of the same phrases also helps tremendously in the early stages, when your child knows that the same sentence will be repeated at each stage of the story.

Books which are ideal for regular repetition are 'Chicken Licken' (who thinks the sky is falling down!), 'The Enormous Turnip', 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' (with the troll under the bridge!) and 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'.



Some ideas when sharing a book together:

### 1. Use sound strategies to tackle a new word.

- Ask your child to sound out an unknown word. Look at the letters in a difficult word and have your child pronounce each sound, or phoneme. Then see if he can blend the sounds together to pronounce the word.
- Help him memorise irregular words. Explain that words like *where*, *hour*, or *sign* are hard to sound out since they don't follow normal sound patterns. Point these words out when you're reading to help your child learn to recognise them on his own.
- Use suffixes, prefixes, and root words. If your child knows the word *day*, guide him to define new words like *yesterday* or *daily*. Similarly, if he knows what *pre-* means, it's easy to learn new words like *prepare* or *preschool*.

### 2. Use the story to help your child learn.

- Ask your child what word or idea would make sense in the plot of the story when she gets stuck on an unfamiliar word.
- Encourage your child to look at illustrations, pictures, titles, or graphs to figure out the meaning of new words.

### 3. Give support and encouragement.

- When your child has built up a fairly large bank of words that they can read you can challenge them to figure out new words. Always remember to supply the word before they become frustrated.
- After your child has read a story, reread it aloud yourself so that he can enjoy it without interruption.

**4. Be a good role model.** Let your child see you reading, and share your excitement when you enjoy a great book of your own.



**5. Make reading a priority.** Whether it's 10 minutes every night before bed or an hour every Sunday morning, it helps to set aside a specific time for reading. This kind of special "together time" can go a long way toward getting your child interested in books. Try not to show your child if you are struggling to find time to read their school book with them.

**6. Create the right atmosphere.** Find a quiet comfortable place to listen to your child read. While you don't need to build a special reading nook, it helps to ensure that, even in a busy home, there's a quiet place for reading.

**7. Make reading fun.** Kids may not get excited about the idea of quiet time spent curled up on the couch. Play around with funny voices to impersonate animals or unusual characters in stories. You'll get to release some tension, and your child will learn to think of reading as fun rather than work.

**8. Keep reading aloud to your child.** Don't stop reading aloud to your child once she learns to read by herself. When you read to her, you let your child enjoy books that are beyond her independent reading level and build her vocabulary by exposing her to new words. Reading aloud is also a chance for you to model reading smoothly and with expression.

**9. Introduce new books.** Each year there is one book that seems to steal the hearts and minds of all children. While it may seem like the only book your child wants to read, it's important to remember that there are millions of books that will suit your child's interests and capture his imagination. Use these resources to help your child find great books:

