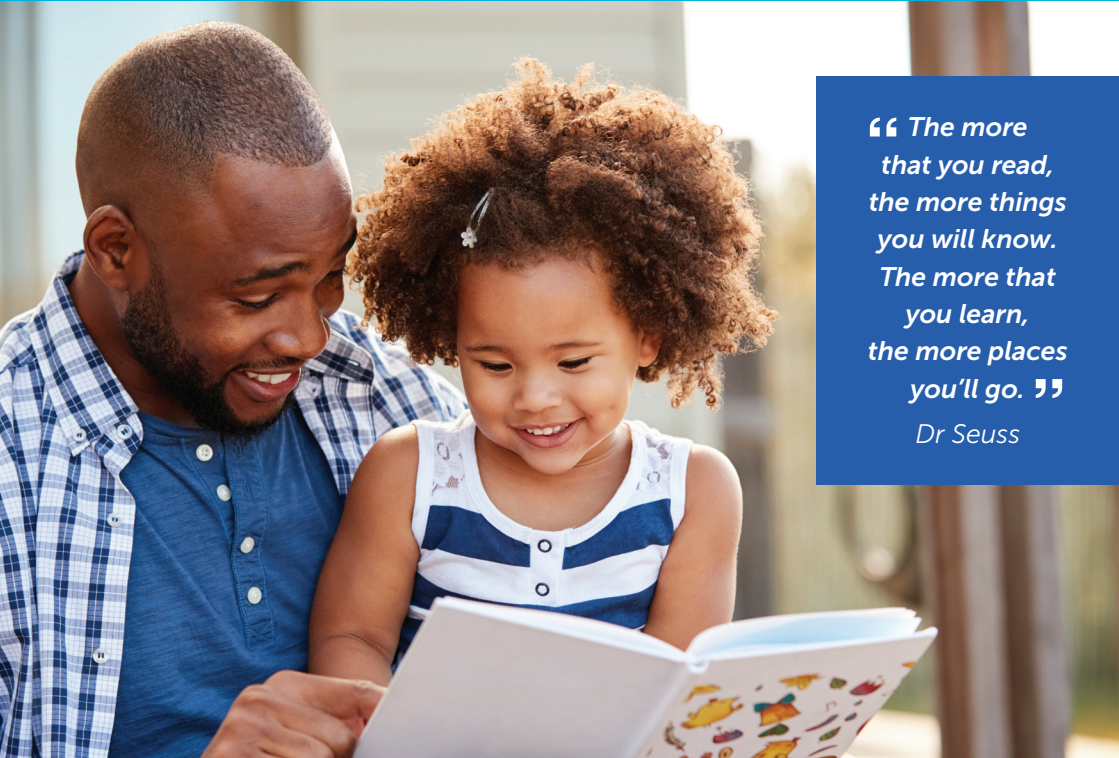


Raising a reader



*“ The more
that you read,
the more things
you will know.
The more that
you learn,
the more places
you’ll go. ”*

Dr Seuss

When will your child become a reader?

Is it when he or she starts school and learns the alphabet?

Actually, the process can start before then, when your child is just a baby, and you read a story or talk about the animals on a page. And the good news is that it’s never too late to start encouraging your child to become a successful reader!

Why is reading important?

There are so many reasons that reading is important, that it's hard to list just a few! Here are our Top Ten:

- ✓ Reading improves **concentration**. This helps children in all their subjects at school, as well as later when they enter the world of work.
- ✓ Reading improves **memory** – also a great skill in all subjects.
- ✓ Reading improves **language skills** and **communication**.
- ✓ You can **learn about the world** and its people and places. You can learn about how things work and the processes that shape society.
- ✓ Reading can make you **kinder**. When we read about different people and their experiences, we understand them better and are more likely to sympathise with them.
- ✓ Reading can help develop **self-esteem**. When you understand the world (and your place in it) more fully, you can become more confident.
- ✓ Reading stimulates **imagination** and **creativity**. This isn't just important for artists – it helps you think in a more creative way about problem-solving in all subjects.
- ✓ Reading can make you a more **critical thinker** – a vital skill for living in our confusing world!
- ✓ Reading together can be a **bonding experience** for parents and children.
- ✓ Reading is **fun**! It's entertaining and interesting.

“ A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies ... The man who never reads lives only one. ”

George RR Martin

Inspiring young readers

How can we help young children become readers? These tips can help:

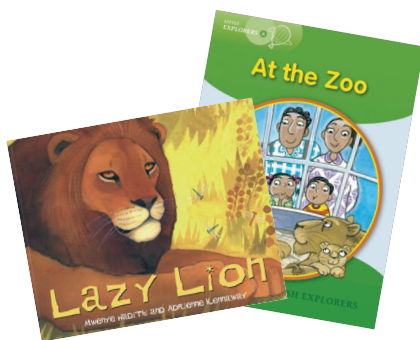
- ✓ Read words in the environment. This is helpful for children who are just learning to read. Point out a stop sign or easy labels at the shops and ask them what they say.
- ✓ Let the child choose the book. Don't make them read books they find boring.



- ✓ Read. Children learn by imitating what their caregivers do, so if they see you reading, they'll follow your example. You could have a special reading time, if your child is old enough, when you both read your own books quietly together.
- ✓ Keep as many books in the home as possible so they're part of your daily life. Talk about the books you have and add to your collection when possible.
- ✓ Use reading a story as a reward for good behaviour – never as a punishment or as a consequence of 'bad' behaviour. If a child has to go for a time-out, don't make them read as part of the time-out. If reading is seen as part of a punishment a child will think about it in a negative way.

“ Children are made readers
on the laps of their parents. ”

Emile Buchwald



Reading with your child

Children love reading with adults! Try these tips to keep this love going:

- ✓ Reading doesn't have to be at a specific time, such as before bedtime. Read stories together whenever you have some time – and it's always fun to read just before bedtime too.
- ✓ Read with expression and use different voices for different characters. Don't worry about sounding silly – kids will love your enthusiasm. Let them take part in the reading. For example, the child could say 'meow' whenever you read the word 'cat', or they could help make the sound effects ('bang!' 'crash!' 'splash!')
- ✓ Let the child touch the book and turn the pages. This helps them feel part of the process of reading.
- ✓ Ask questions while you're reading. *Why was the lion cross? Who stole the hats? Who was naughty in the story? What does this word mean?*
- ✓ Ask your child for predictions about the story. *What do you think the lion will do now? Do you think the thief will be able to eat all of the cake?* If the child gets the predictions wrong, that's OK! Their answers don't need to be right – they just need to think about the story.
- ✓ Ask for a value judgement about the story and the characters, and accept negative opinions. If kids don't like a book, that's OK too! They don't have to like every book they ever read, but they should be able to say why they didn't like it. Share your own opinions about the story, the characters, and the pictures.

Books on a budget

The monthly budget doesn't always stretch to buying new books! Think outside the box and try these sources of books that don't cost a lot:

- ✓ If you live close to a public library, join up and get access to their books. Even a small library will have a variety of books, and many libraries have a special children's hour when someone reads a story aloud.
- ✓ Make your own books. You can write your own stories on paper, and illustrate them with drawings or pictures cut from magazines. You could also write books about topics like animals, machines, or travel, for example. Fold the pages and staple them in the middle. If they're very popular with your child, you could make the book on cardboard so it's stronger.
- ✓ Charity shops often have great bargains.
- ✓ Form a book club with friends, family and neighbours, and share resources with them.
- ✓ Remember that children love re-reading favourite books, so you don't need a constant supply of new books! Old favourites often offer something new each time you re-read them.

Contact Macmillan Education for all your reader requirements.

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