

## THE NEST - FOCUS ON READING

*“Reading to my children in the evening has been a massive commitment in my family. Now, 15 years later, having read to at least one of my children (almost) every single night, the challenges of this have well and truly paid off. Don’t get me wrong, this has not been easy. There have been many evenings where I have had to remind myself why I do this, and even give myself a little incentive for once again travelling to the land of dragons and lost girls. So here, I share with you the rationale for sharing stories with your children... if you make time for one thing in your day, make time for sharing a proper book!” Debbie, The Nest Manager.*

### **The importance reading**

Did you know that learning to read, write and do maths starts at birth?

Time spent reading together brings so many benefits to your child – and you! Through reading, your child will hear lots of words that they might not be as likely to come across in everyday conversation. They will also develop their listening skills and develop their understanding of how stories work. Rhythm and rhyme are so important for early language development and, luckily, there are masses of wonderful books available. Encourage your child to talk about the pictures, or to make predictions about what will happen next.

### **How can I help my child get ready for reading?**

Children first learn about language, and this prepares them for reading. Talking and singing to your child builds pathways in their brain that will help them learn to understand what you are saying and how to talk. All of these fun activities will help:

- rock your baby in rhythm to music
- sing songs and lullabies, and say rhymes to them
- talk with your child often – chat about their day, describe what is happening and ask them questions.

When they get older you can:

- play fun word games such as Simon Says, I Spy – and rhyming words
- sing songs, share poems and rhymes together
- help them make up their own stories and songs about everyday things.

## **Does reading to them help?**

Yes, it helps a lot. Your child loves to hear you read to them and this is one of the best things you can do to help them learn about language, learn to read and grow a lifelong love of reading. Here are some tips to make the most of reading to your child:

- start right from birth
- make reading a special quiet time with your child
- read in your own language
- show your baby picture books and read aloud to them often
- talk about what's in the pictures.

They will learn that books, and the words in them can be fun, amusing, comforting and full of excitement and information. Reading – and being read to – is like unlocking a door to learning. It provides access to just about all other knowledge.

## **Keep reading together as your child grows**

- Have a regular time for reading together and let your child choose their 'favourites' – they'll enjoy hearing you read them again and again
- Talk about the pictures in books and see if they can guess what will happen next
- Praise your child when they make a comment or contribution to the story
- Stop reading when they have had enough – always make reading a fun thing to do
- Get books from lots of different places - libraries, book fairs, second-hand shops or ask friends and family if they have any they no longer need
- Show your child how useful reading can be. Point out letters and words everywhere – road signs, shop signs, instructions for toys,
- party invitations, maps, and bus timetables.

### ***Be a role model.***

***Let your child see you reading often – newspapers, books, magazines – where possible, not on an electronic device, this helps your child see that reading is important in your family.***

