

Paired Reading

Paired reading involves the skilled reader and learner reading aloud together. It is a strategy designed to take the pressure away from the child who may find reading challenging. It is a supportive approach where the child is encouraged to read as many or as few words as they feel comfortable. This should then begin to instil the idea that reading is nothing to be feared. The process supports fluency as it encourages continuity rather than stopping at difficult words. This helps the child obtain meaning from the text as well as develop expression and phrasing which is modelled to them. Paired reading is a useful way of giving children access to books which are at their interest level but not necessarily within their reading capability.

Other advantages

- ☺ Children get their own time and attention – there is evidence that this alone can improve reading.
- ☺ Children get through books faster because they are supported and therefore it increases the amount of sheer practice children get at reading.
- ☺ It gives parents a clear, straightforward and enjoyable way of helping their children.

What do I need?

- A range of books to choose from – from home, school, library.
- Newspapers or magazines.

The child should choose the reading material. They learn better from books they like. Don't worry if it seems too hard, the adult helps the child through the difficult bits. The child also learns to choose books at a more appropriate level and because they have chosen the book the reading is enjoyable for them.

Who can do it?

- Parents, carers, teachers, teaching assistants, peer tutors, grandparents, older brothers or sisters – someone who is a skilled reader and who has been trained in the technique.

How does it work?

Find a quiet place with few distractions; be comfortable; sit so you can both see the book together. It is best to try and do some Paired Reading **every day**, even **for 5-10 minutes**. Don't do more than 15 minutes unless the child really wants to.

Paired Reading Method

There are 2 stages – reading together and reading alone.

Reading together:

1. Adult and child read along together. The adult needs to adjust their speed to fit the child.
This also sets the example of how to read well including using expression and phrasing with punctuation.
2. Read every word. If the child struggles with a word then gets it right give praise.
3. Do not let the child struggle for more than 5 seconds – at this time just say the word yourself.
4. The child then repeats the word – make sure they repeat it properly.
5. Make sure the child looks at the words – it may help to point at the text as you read; ideally the child should do the pointing.

Reading alone:

As you read together and your child feels confident, they might want to read some part alone.

1. Agree beforehand a signal between you e.g. a tap, a squeeze, a nudge. (You do not want the child to have to say "Be quiet") It must be clear and easy to do.
2. When the child signals **you** stop reading out loud immediately and **praise** them for making the sign (it is demonstrating confidence).
3. When the child struggles with a word and/or gets it wrong **say** the word and the child **repeats** it – don't let them struggle for more than 5 seconds.
4. Continue reading together until the child gives another sign that they wish to continue alone.
5. Always go back to reading together when the child has a problem with a word.

Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Try and do it every day for 5 – 10 minutes
- Allow the child to choose their reading material
- Make sure that all experienced readers with the child are using the same method and following the rules
- Make sure the child reads **every** word
- Give lots of praise – for giving the signal, for good reading of hard words, self-correcting words before you do
- Show interest in the book; talk about the pictures and the story at the end of a page or section – it is important you listen to the child, and it checks their understanding of what they are reading
- Keep a reading diary: what has been read and how they are getting on, how long they read for each session and any positive comments. This can be shared with their teacher.
- Train those who are going to do this – don't forget to train the child!

Don't:

- Make the child struggle by having to 'work out' a word by sounding out or breaking it up
- Forget the 5 second rule – that is how long you give the child before providing a word they are struggling with
- Don't jump in too quickly – give them the 5 seconds
- Make a fuss when they get a word wrong

