



Ideas for encouraging early reading skills

- Reading a book together is a chance to snuggle up and enjoy each other's company. It can be a comforting experience to help your child relax before bedtime, but books can be enjoyed at different times of the day. Try to pick a time when your child is interested and not distracted.
- Aim to stop before your child gets bored. Ten to 15 minutes is usually a good guide, but your child may still be interested and ask for the story to be repeated.
- Share a variety of books together, stories, rhymes, non-fiction books to find out information about things your child is interested in.
- Talk about the roles of the author and illustrator.
- Talk about different parts of the book: cover/title/blurb/spine/contents.
- Show your child that in English texts, we start at the front of the book and read to the back, start at the top of the page and read left to right.
- Does your child hold the book the right way up? Can they turn over the page at the right point when you are reading the story with them?
- Encourage your child to talk about a favourite story. Can they recall the main facts? Which was their favourite character and why? Can they retell the story in their own words? (can vary a little from the original).
- Tell your child oral stories, for example traditional tales or a story about your own family.
- Encourage your child to make up their own stories by talking, drawing, acting them out with toys or puppets. You could make a book together with help from you to write down your child's words.
- Your child could act out their story, with family members taking on the parts of the other characters.
- Play letter/word recognition snap by writing short words or family names on cards and turning them over to match up and read.
- Playing simple games such as I spy or ask children if they can see something beginning with a particular letter sound.
- Use magnetic letters or flash cards to build and sound out words
- Put items in a box, as your child to pick one out and tell you what sound it begins with.
- Play a treasure hunt to find as many items they can which start with the same sound.
- Explain to your child that rhyming words sound the same at the end of the word. Think up different words that rhyme or words that begin with the same letter and make silly sentences together. Can they suggest words to rhyme with a word you say? (nonsense words are OK).
- The Scottish Book Trust website has lots more ideas and resources <https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading-and-stories/tips-on-sharing-songs-and-rhymes>

