

Tips for Reading at Home

Tip 1: Eye tracking.

We read from left to right. If you can, sit to the right of your child when helping them to read. When they are stuck point to the difficult letter or word and run your finger under it saying the sound(s) aloud. This encourages their eyes to start L and move to the right, working with you.

Tip 2: 'What can you see?'

Frequently ask this question if they come across a difficult word. The child may only recognise a letter or part of a word, but this is good, they are engaged and learning. Give them something to work with 'What can you see in the middle of the word, that sound is in your name?'. Don't push too much, let them attempt 2 answers and then tell them. Revisit the word later to see if they recognise it now.

Tip 3: 'Run your finger'

Use your index finger to work through a word. For example, point under the beginning sound of a word, run your finger underneath and along the word as you say the sounds. If a child has made a mistake but they don't know why, revisit the word. Get them to do this with their index finger. It encourages good eye tracking and helps with blending.

Tip 4: Framing

Learning to decipher a word is tricky. Children need to focus on that word alone and all the other text and pictures can be a distraction. Use both index fingers to frame the word (left finger at beginning, right finger at end of the word).

Tip 5: Chewing Gum

If your child is struggling with blending - pretend to put the word into your mouth with chewing gum. Mix the sounds up and then reform the word. Pretend to pull the chewing gum out of your mouth and stretch it whilst very slowly, over emphasising the sounds. Ask them to copy you. Practice with lots of words and encourage them to visualise the letters as they say the sounds. Kids find this funny!

Tip 6: 'Where was your mistake?'

Try not to interrupt when your child is reading, even if they make a mistake on a word (if they are really struggling then the book is too

difficult for them and they need to reread something familiar). Let the flow go on. At the end praise something they read really well and then ask them to spot where they made a mistake. Reread the sentence to them including their mistake and ask them to identify it - 'On page 6, in this sentence you made a mistake. Can you spot it? You said...' (this reinforces eye tracking and their listening, matching skills).