

Paired Reading

A 'How to' Guide For Parents/Carers

Extract from "Thinking Reading Writing: A Practical Guide to Paired Learning with Peers, Parents & Volunteers" by Keith Topping (2001)

PAIRED READING is a very good way for parents and carers to help with their children's reading. It works well with most children and their reading gets a lot better. Also, **Paired Reading** fits in very well with the teaching at school, so children don't get mixed up. Most children really like it - it helps them want to read.

What You Need...



Books to choose from, at home or from school or the library. The child can also choose newspapers, magazines, or internet blogs/pages they **want** to read.

Your child **must** choose the text. Children learn to read better from things they are interested in. Don't worry if it seems too hard. In **Paired Reading** you help the child through the hard bits.

If your child gets fed up with a text, and wants to change it, that's O.K. Help them to think about what they are finding hard and how they can choose more carefully next time.

And what to do...



Try very hard to do some Paired Reading nearly every day, even if only for 5 minutes. Aim for 5 days per week. Don't do more than 15 minutes unless your child wants to carry on. If you haven't got the time to do **Paired Reading**, enrol others; grandmother, grandfather, older brother or sister can help and can make reading a family affair! Make sure you all do **Paired Reading** in just the same way, so your child doesn't get mixed up.



Don't make children do **Paired Reading** when they really want to do something else. Talk to your child's teacher if this is happening all the time.



Find a place that's quiet. Children can't read when it's noisy, or when there's lots going on. Get away from the TV, or turn it off.



Find a place that is comfy and get warm and snuggly. You both need to be able to see the book easily.

It's often harder for parents/carers to learn new things than it is for children! So here are **the rules...**

1. Always start by **Reading Together**, especially when reading something which is hard for the child. You and your child both read the words out loud together. You must not go too fast so that the child can mirror you if they are unsure or hesitant. Set the speed to suit your child. This helps the child through the hard bits and gives a good example of how to read well.
2. When you are Reading Together and your child feels good enough, he or she might want to do some **Reading Alone**. You should agree on a way for your child to signal for you to stop Reading Together. This could be a knock, a sign or a squeeze. Some children like to nudge you. The signal must be clear, easy to do and agreed between you before you start. (You don't want your child to have to say "be quiet", or you will both lose the flow of reading).
3. When the child signals, you stop reading out loud straight away, and praise the child (non-verbally) for being confident.
4. When **Reading Alone**, sooner or later your child will struggle for more than 5 seconds, or struggle and get it wrong. Then you read the word out loud right for your child and make sure your child says it right as well.
5. Then you both go back to **Reading Together** again, to get back into a flow. Soon your child will again feel good enough to read alone and again signal you to be quiet. You will go on like this, switching from **Reading Together** to **Reading Alone** to give the child just as much help as they need. Expect to **Read Together** more on hard books and less on easy books.

Make sure you stick to the "Rules", at least for the first few weeks. If you don't, you may get in a muddle.

Check...

- ✓ Are you doing your own "job"? It is your child's job to signal for you to stop reading; don't decide to go quiet when you feel like it.
- ✓ Are you correcting and going back to **Reading Together** when your child makes a mistake? The child might ask for you only to give them the word they got stuck on - but that's not what the Rules say!
- ✓ Are you just telling your child what the word says when he/she is struggling? Remember, you say the word right, then your child says it after you. You DON'T make the child struggle and struggle, or ask them to 'break it up' or 'sound it out'.

- ✓ Are you giving the child 4 or 5 seconds to see if they will get it right by themselves? If your child zooms straight past a mistake without noticing it, you may have to point out the mistake a bit quicker.
- ✓ Are you smiling and showing pleasure when your child reads well? DON'T nag and fuss about the words your child gets wrong. Praise for good reading of hard words, getting all the words in a sentence right and putting wrong words right before you do (self correction).
- ✓ Parents/carers often ask "should we point at the words?" But only do it when necessary, not all the time. If the child can do it rather than you, that's much better.
- ✓ Are you showing interest in the book your child has chosen? Talk about the pictures. Talk about what's in the book as your child goes through it. It's best if you talk at the end of a page or section, or your child might lose track of the story. Ask what your child thinks might happen next. Listen to your child - don't you do all the talking. Talking shows that you are interest in what your child is reading. It also checks on the child's understanding without seeming like a "test".
- ✓ Are you having fun and enjoying your time together?