



Dear Parent or Caregiver,

Your child has just begun their lifelong journey into literacy!

As a parent/caregiver, you play an important role in supporting your child on this journey. We now know that, unlike learning to speak, learning to read is not a natural human activity and a child's brain needs to be taught to make the connections between the letters on the page, speech sounds, and meaning of words and text. So as your little ones are sounding out words they are, literally, reshaping their brains for reading!

We know that the early stages may seem difficult (for you and your child!), so here are some tips that will help you both:

- 1. Be patient.** The early stages of learning to read can be hard work and, what seems easy to us as fluent readers, may take time for beginner readers. Children are learning to crack a secret code of letters. At some point, the code will be cracked and your child will begin to recognise words automatically. Then the words will start to fly off the page!
- 2. Children learn at different speeds.** Not all children will learn to read at the same pace. Some will learn to crack the code more quickly than others. Work at the pace of your child and be confident that she/he will become a reader.
- 3. Learning to read is hard work.** Choose a good time of day when your child is not too tired to read. Bedtime may not be the best time to do something that is hard.
- 4. Reading little and often is advisable.** Even a page or two a day! This is better than trying to read pages and pages in one sitting.
- 5. Sharing reading is still reading.** If your child is reluctant to read, share the effort by reading alternate pages or paragraphs. Putting pressure on a child who is reluctant to read may create a resistance to reading.
- 6. Praise your child.** When we show children that we recognise their effort and achievement, this motivates them to continue learning to read.
- 7. Read to your child.** Language is an essential part of reading. Daily reading to your child will help your child develop their own love of reading, their understanding of the world, and their vocabulary. It will also show your child how to read with expression. Talk to your child about what you have read together. Discuss books that your child is reading and books that you are reading with them. This will help develop their vocabulary, expressive language, and understanding of the world.
- 8. Sound out new words.** Encourage your child to point to the words and sound them out, not guess from the pictures or the context of the story. The clues for decoding words are in the letters.



With your support at home, I know your child will make great progress this year! If you have any questions or would like any additional tips for making reading a fun, regular habit please do reach out.