Encouraging a love of reading

One of the easiest and most valuable things you can do is help your children develop a love of reading. Reading is not only fun, it is an essential skill that helps children succeed at school and learn about the world around them.

**What can I do?**

Read often with your children. Try nursery rhymes, story books, information books, books you make together, poems, riddles, jokes, websites, online books, comics, newspapers, catalogues, magazines and recipes. The options are endless!

**Children go through three stages as they learn to read**

1. **Role-play reader**: Children begin to take an interest in books and the writing they see around them. They start to imitate you, such as holding books the right way up and turning the pages carefully. They often pretend to read using the pictures and their memories to retell stories.
   - Read aloud often to show them how important reading is and to expand their use of words.
   - Encourage and praise their attempts when they pretend to read.
   - Look at pictures, talk about what is happening and see how the pictures help the story.
   - Read their favourite stories again and again – familiarity builds confidence.

2. **Experimental reader**: Children continue to read using pictures and their memories. They may identify some words but are more focused on the meaning rather than reading every word the right way.
   - Encourage them to ‘have a go’ at reading, praising them continually.
   - Talk with them about the characters and story line.
   - Encourage them to express their opinions about what is happening in the story.
   - Talk about the different letters, sounds, words and interesting features of the things you read.
   - Stop to ask *What do you think will happen next?* and *What makes you think that?* Accept their answers even if they are not quite right.

Children have about 50 words in their vocabulary at two-and-a-half years old. They should have 5000 words by the time they reach Kindergarten.
3. Early reader: Children read books they know confidently. New books are read slowly and deliberately. They focus on the printed word and try to read exactly what is on the page.

- Read to them as often as possible.
- Encourage them to talk about what happens in the story.
- Encourage them to express opinions about the things they read.
- Point out key words and explain words they may not know.
- Encourage different ways of working out words they don’t know like guessing, using clues, sounding out words, and reading and re-reading the sentence again.
- Encourage them to talk about how they worked out a word they did not know.

Join the library
Libraries are a treasure trove for young readers! They have a wide range of books, CDs, DVDs, videos and magazines as well as storytelling sessions. To find your local library visit siwa.wa.gov.au

Suggested reading
1. Hairy Maclary and Friends by Lynley Dodd (ABC Books)
2. Owl Babies by Martin Waddell (Walker)
3. Koala Lou by Mem Fox (Penguin)
4. Mr Grumpy’s Outing by John Burningham (Red Fox)
5. Who Sank the Boat? By Pamela Allen (Thomas Nelson)

Fun activities
1. Write notes on message boards for your children to read each day.
2. Write shopping lists together. Have your children read out each item and help you find them on the shelves.
3. Cook things together. Ask your children to read out the recipe and gather the ingredients.

Encourage your children to choose what they want to read. If they read things they really enjoy, they will learn to love reading!


W: det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou