LITERACY HELP

Reading at Home

At St Mary’s we send home three different kinds of books with your children.

1. Home readers
2. Guided readers
3. Library books

**Home Readers** are books which are EASY for your child to read. They should be able to read them with few, if any, mistakes. Children choose these books by themselves from a box identified by the teacher. Children should read these books aloud to an adult.

**Guided Readers** are books which may be more difficult for your child to read. The teacher has chosen this book for your child. Children should be able to read most words, but may need help with some words. At home, children should read these books aloud, sitting next to an adult who can praise and prompt them (see the explanation of this strategy below).

**Library books** are books which your child has chosen for him or herself. These are often books that are too HARD for your child to read independently but can be shared with an adult. The adult might read it aloud to the child.

You may have heard of ‘Pause, Prompt, Praise’ as a strategy to help children when they are reading to you.

Below is an explanation of the strategy from the School A to Z website, [http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/](http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/)

**STRATEGIES TO USE WHEN CHILDREN ARE READING ALOUD TO AN ADULT**

These three catchy words describe a simple technique that, used well, will help your child practise their reading and develop their reading confidence.

The principle of pausing, then prompting and then praising is handy to remember any time your child is reading aloud to you.

It’s best used when your child is reading and gets stuck on words that they can’t read or are new to them.

When you child comes across words that are difficult for them to read, the Three Ps technique lets them have another go, self-correct and, if needed, find out (be told) what the problem word is.

**Important things to remember about the Three Ps**

- The goal of reading is to understand (make sense) of what is read, so always keep this in mind when you are prompting and praising your child.

- Try to ensure that you are relaxed, interested and supportive, which will help your child feel OK when they make mistakes or just can’t work out a word and need to be told what it is.

- At home this technique will work best when your child is reading something that is well-matched to their reading level, that is, where your child can easily read most of the words in the text and only stumbles on occasional words.

- Before reading, make sure both of you are comfortable and can clearly see what is being read.
**Pause**
Once your child starts reading aloud, carefully follow the text as they read. If or when your child comes to a word they don’t know, try not to jump in straight away and tell them the word. Wait and give your child time to work out the word. Pausing creates an opportunity for your child to try to self-correct or work out the word.

**Prompt**
If your child works out the word they have stumbled over, it’s a good idea to suggest they go back to the beginning of the sentence and re-read the whole sentence again so they can understand the meaning before reading on.

If your child has not been able to work out the problem word, prompt them with some quick, low-key suggestions about what they could do by saying things like:

- "Try reading on for a sentence or two, miss out the difficult word, and see if that helps you to work out what it is."
- "Look at the sound the word begins with, use that clue, and think about what might make sense here. Look at the pictures and see if they give you a clue to what the word might be."
- "Go back to the beginning of the sentence, re-read it, and have another go at working it out."

If prompts like these are not working, this is the point at which you simply tell your child the correct word. Ask:

- "Would you like me to help you?" or "How about I tell you the word?"

You may even briefly explain the meaning of the word but then quickly prompt your child to continue reading.

Try not to spend too much time prompting as your child will find it difficult to maintain the overall meaning of what they are reading.

**Praise**
This is the easiest part of the process for parents because it’s something that comes naturally. Praise your child’s reading efforts and successes during their reading time.

As well as praising your child’s effort it’s often good to tell them why. This will give your child a clear understanding of what they’re doing well. And give yourself a pat on the back, too. Learning to read is a team effort.


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