

Reading



Welcome to this weeks Curriculum Post, which highlights the immense value that reading to your child has over their development. If you have any questions or would like more information then please come and see Rachel (in Meadowside). We'd love to see any posts on Tapestry of you exploring reading at home.

The importance of reading for children cannot be underestimated. Reading for pleasure can benefit a child's education, social and cognitive development, their wellbeing, and their mental health.

If you share book regularly with your child:

1. Their vocabulary is larger and more extensive. Parents who read 1 picture book with their children every day provide their children with exposure to an estimated 78,000 words each a year.
2. They perform better academically.
3. Their imagination can run wild. Children are exposed to a range of ideas and possibilities and worlds they can only imagine – and use this in their play to deepen their understanding of the world.
4. Their creativity skills develop.
5. They develop empathy. You can use reading time as a chance to talk about emotions and how to cope with them. For example, you might say: "Have you ever felt as angry as the girl in this book? What would you do if you did?" Talking about the feelings and emotions of others may be easier for your child as it is not about them or their behaviour.

There's no one right way to read to your child. You can read to them in any language, or multiple languages. You can do it at the same time every day or change up the routine. Your child doesn't even need to be sitting with you — just sitting nearby with a book while they play can be a way to connect.

If you read with your child at home, then you are supplementing what they learn in the classroom as well as giving them additional one-on-one support that the classroom cannot regularly give. To have successful and effective reading sessions, consider the following:

*Start young. Even during infancy, a child can look at pictures and listen to your voice. Read aloud to your child and point to the pictures on the page, saying the name of the objects that appear. This provides your child with two sources of information: an understanding of real-world objects and an understanding of the importance of language. Even when your child can read by themselves, you should still read aloud together for practice.

*Make it part of your routine. Try your best to read to your child every day and keep it consistent. Incorporate this into your, and your child's, daily routine until it becomes as much of a habit as them brushing their teeth. However, try not to be discouraged if you miss a day – just pick your routine back up as normal when you have time.

*Encourage variation. Try to vary the books that you read to your child as much as possible. This will open their eyes to a range of different worlds, cultures, and characters, and allow their imagination to be stretched and thrive.

*Continue the discussion. After you've finished reading a story to your child, consider trying to keep it going. Age depending, you could ask them questions about what they've just read. For example, "Did you enjoy that story?", "Who was your favourite character?" or "Why do you think the prince was happy at the end?". However, don't feel that this is necessary for every single story you read. If your child enjoys the book, it will develop a love of reading anyway, even without the conversation.

7. Their concentration levels improve – schools are reporting a decrease in children's concentration, which has a direct impact on their ability to learn.

8. The parent and child bond improves.

9. Their cognitive development is supported.

10. Their social skills and interaction improve.

