

The Importance of Reading at Home

Encouraging children to read simply for pleasure requires time, patience, and support. It's estimated that children need 5000 hours of practice time to master the complex skills required for them to become strong readers. This cannot be accomplished in the classroom alone; especially with teachers already juggling a demanding curriculum!

When teaching children to read, we build upon their early knowledge of language acquired through their interactions and experiences. If children do not grow up in language rich environments, they can often find it difficult to keep up with their peers who do, especially when it comes to learning to read. These early literacy attainment gaps in the classroom can have a devastating impact on social mobility. For the 28% of primary children who start their education behind their peers, it can be extremely difficult to catch up. Their peers don't wait and the gap simply widens. Some of the latest DfE statistics now even suggest those children who do have poor vocabularies at the age of five are twice as likely to be unemployed at the age of 34.

Within schools we can provide children with many opportunities to develop their enthusiasm for reading, however, it is just as important to ensure that children's home environments also support their literacy development. Those children whose parents/carers are involved with their reading not only begin school with an academic advantage over their peers, but also show much greater emotional resilience, an ability to maintain more positive relationships, as well as present with fewer behavioural problems. For the families themselves, reading can also provide a wonderful opportunity to spend time adventuring together into a world of books. However, it's no secret that the importance of shared reading can often be overlooked, especially amidst today's many technological distractions. **Just 15 minutes of home reading each day can have an incredible impact on a child's development.** Children who see their parents/carers value and engage with reading themselves are also much more likely to read for their own pleasure. It's therefore important for parents/carers to show they value reading by sharing and discussing books with their children.

The home reading tips (attached) can help improve engagement at home.

Adapted from Lexplore: Reading for Pleasure booklet