

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



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Dear Parents/Carers

Many families ask, "What can I do at home to support my child?"

Read! Reading at home will give your children a tremendous advantage in school. The answer is that simple. A child who comes to school having had enjoyable experiences with books is far ahead of others in literacy skills, attention span, and ability to experience success in school. There's no question about it— children who are learning to read benefit significantly from the practice and experience that family reading provides.

We want to do everything we can to help your child to read and write – and we will. We teach children how to read. We teach them how to write.

We want them to read and write really well so that they are confident when they see pages of writing that they haven't seen before and so that they are confident when we ask them to write things.

If you help us, your child will do really well.

Please make sure that you read to them. Try to do this once a day.

The most important thing you should do is make sure that your children see plenty of books or magazines or comics – or all three.

Why is this all so important?

1. In school, we ask children to read things and find out what's important – 'browsing'. It is very hard to teach browsing. The best way to learn browsing is going to a bookshop, going to a library (both very tricky during lockdown) or sitting with a pile of books or magazines and choosing what you want to read, or just sorting your books and magazines in ways that you like.
2. In school, we ask children to think about difficult ideas. This might be about, say, why or how things happened. It might be when we ask children to think about 'if' and 'why'. If children read lots of different kinds of books, they will start to think about such things as part of their reading.



3. In school, we ask children to think beyond themselves, to think about why or how other people think and behave. If children read lots of different kinds of books, they will start to think about such things as part of their reading.

4. In school, we want children to ask questions, wonder about things, be curious and interested. Again, if children read lots of different kinds of books, they will be children who do just that: ask questions, wonder, be curious and interested.

5. Like adults, children are full of feelings and thoughts. Like adults, these sometimes boil over and the children don't always know what to do with them. Reading books often show us people facing up to problems and finding ways to deal with them. This means that reading books helps children find ways of dealing with their feelings and thoughts.

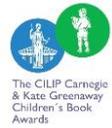
We know from research all over the world that children who read widely and often and who have plenty of books or magazines to read do better at school than children who don't have books and magazines.

We encourage each and every parent to utilise this period in your child's life when their mind is absorbent and open and introduce the reading habit. Please don't make it into another thing that has to be accomplished, but more of a tactful investment in getting into a book together and sharing the enjoyment of it. Most non-readers will not take kindly to being told to read a book. They will view it as another chore on the never-ending list of things that grown-ups expect children to do. **The trick is to join them in the reading, enjoy it with them, like and hate characters with them, speculate about the story with them, and generally have fun.**

With all that in mind, your child will begin to bring home reading books from our reading scheme. These books are wordless or have very few words but are very important to your child's reading development. Early Books allow children to learn how stories work, including the order and direction in which they read, without the pressure of too many words on the page. Children will enjoy talking about the story and discussing what is happening in the pictures. The first step in reading is to use visual prompts to help read the words. The pictures provide lots of opportunities for playing with environmental sounds, an important step in the teaching of phonics.

Activities and ideas when sharing these books with your child:

- Respond to your child's ideas by repeating them back and introducing new words to increase their vocabulary.
- Look at the front cover and read the title to your child. Ask them what they think the story will be about? Relate the title back to your child i.e. 'The lost gloves' have they ever lost anything? or 'Puddles' what do you do when you see a puddle?
- Allow your child to turn the pages of the book and describe what they see in the pictures. You could take it in turns to tell a page of the story.
- Encourage your child to add sounds to accompany the action in story and talk about any sounds that might be found in the story setting i.e. 'Feed the Birds' what sounds might you hear outside?
- Once you have finished sharing the book ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Did they enjoy the story? Why?
- Record any comments in your child's reading record book, every time you read together.



- Ask your child to point to different things on the page e.g. The angry man.

Children's reading books will be changed weekly, every Friday. Thank you for your continued support and let's embrace this magical journey together.

Mrs Quiney and Miss Gill

