

General Description

Role Play readers show an interest in books and the print they see around them. They imitate the things they see adult readers doing such as holding the book carefully, turning the pages and using computer icons. They often pretend to read by using the pictures and their memory to retell stories.

How to Support Role Play Readers

Role Play readers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions.

- Read to your child every day.
Reading aloud helps children expand their vocabulary, appreciate the value of books and other texts, understand new ideas and concepts, and learn about the world around them.
- Expose your child to a wide variety of texts, e.g. *books, magazines, CD-ROMs, brochures, newspapers, comics*.
These can be read many times so children become familiar with them. Familiarity helps build self-confidence.
- Encourage and praise your child's attempts to 'read'.
- Ensure your child sees other members of the family reading and talking about their reading. This helps Role Play readers understand that there are different reasons for reading.
- Encourage your child to talk about books and their 'reading' with other family members.



Encouraging Reading

To ensure that your child is encouraged to become a reader, consider the following questions.

- Is my child read to every day?
- Does my child see others reading at various times?
- Is a comfortable place provided where my child can be read to? Does my child like this 'space'?
- When reading aloud, is the tone of voice changed for different characters, or to show emotion and excitement?
- Are reading materials chosen that capture my child's interest? Is my child encouraged to select the story to be read?
- Is attention paid to how my child is responding to the story?
- Is the reading stopped when my child loses interest?
- Is my child encouraged to join in while being read to, e.g. *turning the pages, holding the book, allowing them to 'read' the bits they remember?*
- Is my child given sufficient time to answer when questions are asked?
- Are ideas in the story linked with things that happen in my child's life?
- Is my child encouraged to take notice of print, e.g. *find letters from his or her name?*
- Is my child encouraged to retell or act out stories he or she has heard?

Reading to Your Child

It is important to make reading aloud to your child part of your daily routine. Set aside a regular time every day, find a comfortable place without any distractions, and choose something interesting to read together.

Things to do before reading

- Encourage your child to select the book. Give them a pile of well-known books so they can choose which one will be read aloud.
- Familiarise yourself with the book as this will make you a better storyteller. Take a minute to look over the book before you share it with your child.
- Settle your child down and talk a little about the book, e.g. *"This story looks as if it is going to be funny."*
- Browse through the book so your child becomes familiar with books and how they are handled, e.g. *holding the book the right way, turning the pages.*

Things to do when reading

- Read clearly. Make the story interesting by exaggerating expressions for different character voices and sounds. The more dramatic the better. You may like to add simple props so your child can identify with different characters or act out parts of the story.
- Hold the book so your child can see the pictures and writing.
- Sometimes let your child hold the book and turn the pages.
- Draw attention to the pictures.
- Sometimes point to the words as you read.
- Ask and answer questions as needed.
- Encourage your child to join in and 'read' too. Invite him or her to describe pictures, 'read' pages or join in with words that are repeated.
- Accept and praise your child's attempts to 'read'.

Things to do after reading

- Talk about the characters and what happened in the book.
- Help your child tell the story from the pictures.

Keep in mind that your child's reading level and listening level are different. When you read easy books, your child will soon be joining in with you. When you read more advanced books, you instil a love of stories and you build the motivation that encourages children to become lifelong readers.

Selecting Texts

Ensure a wide variety of texts is available, e.g. *books, comics and magazines*. This will give your child exposure to many reading possibilities. If you work on a computer, read signs when you are out, read labels at home or use a road directory, you are also showing your child other instances where reading is involved.

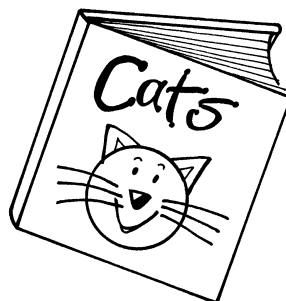
Your child may enjoy texts that:

- describe familiar experiences, e.g. *first day at school, trip to the zoo*
- describe familiar concepts and objects, e.g. *book on rabbits*
- have elements of fantasy or imagination, e.g. *fairytale*s
- use repetition to capture the rhythm of the language, e.g. *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*
- are traditional rhymes and songs. Usually children can't resist joining in because of the rhythmic patterns.

Consider the use of other reading materials such as:

- book and audio tape sets
- CD-ROMs.

Making regular trips to the local library, attending storytelling sessions or visiting local bookstores are ways of increasing your child's access to a wider variety of books.



Modelling Reading

Make sure your child sees you and other members of the family reading. Try to read as many different things in front of your child as possible. Talk about what you are reading and why you are doing it, e.g. *"I am reading this to find out the specials at the supermarket. I am reading this to find out how to change the oil in the car."*

Outside the home, talk about signs, labels and logos, e.g. *"We are going to get hamburgers. See the sign, It says Harry's Hamburgers."* Very young children will quickly begin to identify familiar signs and places.

Model how reading is used in the home every day. Talk about your plans with your child, e.g. *"I am going to bake a cake so let's read the recipe."* Talk through the recipe as you gather the ingredients and follow the procedure.

Telling Stories

By having opportunities to tell stories, your child can extend his or her language skills and also develop an understanding about story sequence.

You can provide opportunities for storytelling by:

- making up stories about things you see as you go about daily tasks, e.g. *when visiting the shops, making dinner, at bath time*
- encouraging your child to make up stories, e.g. *about bedtime, playtime objects, the day's events*
- encouraging your child to make up stories that go with picture books that have no words
- having your child retell favourite stories and enjoying these stories together, adding, praising and prompting as you go
- having a storytelling session where different family members get to share their stories and listen to others.



Developing Awareness of Letters and Words

Draw your child's attention to letters and words that are part of daily life. Point out and read aloud any printed material, e.g. *cereal packets, traffic signs, billboards, advertising signs*. Make everyday outings an opportunity to show your child how print relates to his or her life.

Teach your child to recognise words or letters that are significant to them, e.g. *their name or letters in their name, names of siblings, road signs*. Challenge your child to recognise these words or letters in other places.

Magnetic letters are one way your child can play with and build words. While you work in the kitchen, your child can pick out and play with letters, placing them on the refrigerator.

Make letters out of play dough. Encourage your child to copy your letters and trace over them.

Place labels around the home. These could include labels on:

- doors, e.g. *Please keep quiet, Ross is asleep.*
- food packages, e.g. *Only one biscuit at a time.*
- drawers and wardrobes, e.g. *Ali's socks are in here.*
- toys, e.g. *Jigsaw puzzles are in here.*

These labels should be written in sentences as this helps your child to:

- make a connection between what we say and what we read or write
- understand that once something has been written it stays the same.

Talk about what the labels say and read them together.

Developing Concepts About Texts and Print

Talking with your child about the different parts of a book and how the print works is important. As adults we know this information so well we often forget that we ever learnt it.

Select one or two items from the following list to point out and discuss with your child each time you read together.

- A book has a front and back.
- A book has a right way up.
- Books are read from front to back.
- Pages are turned to reveal the next part of the book.
- The left-hand page is read before the right-hand page.
- A page is read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Print is different from pictures. Point to the print as you read aloud.
- Pictures support the print.
- Talk about first and last. These can be applied to pages in a book, words on a page or letters in a word.
- Words such as 'letter', 'sound', 'word' and 'sentence' describe different things.
- Numbers and letters are different.
- Letters have two forms—capital letters and lower case letters, e.g. 'M' and 'm'.



Building a Love of Reading

There are many ways to encourage your child to be a reader and to develop a love of reading.

- Give books as presents.
- Give books as a treat, e.g. *after school instead of buying an ice cream.*
- Teach nursery rhymes, songs and action rhymes. Say them, sing them or clap them. After a while you will be able to leave out bits for your child to add.
- Have a selection of reading materials such as comics, magazines and books available at all times, e.g. *when travelling, waiting for an appointment or when visiting friends.*
- Have a special place where books are kept.
- Set aside a time for reading.
- Encourage all family members or visitors to the house to take part in reading or being read to.
- Encourage children to select their own books.
- Have a family subscription to a magazine, e.g. *National Geographic.*
- Encourage your child to exchange books with friends.
- Talk about books whenever possible.
- Display your own collection of books.



Questions to Ask

Talking to your child about what is being read is a wonderful opportunity to make connections with his or her life, develop concepts and understandings and develop an awareness of what the black squiggles on the page mean.

You may start your conversation with questions such as:

- Do you remember when you ...?
- Who do you know that has a (dog) like the one in this story?
- What do you think this story is about (just by looking at the cover)?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Which characters do you like best?

Pausing for discussions should be a natural part of the reading process. Sometimes your child will stop and ask you questions, and other times you may ask the questions and direct your child's attention to specific aspects of the story. This should always be a fun way to explore the story/information further, not a time when the child feels 'tested' or interrogated.



Using Computers

Computers can't replace books but they can support what your child is learning.

Many computer programs (also called software) offer activities that can both grab your child's interest and teach good lessons. Children have fun using some of the colourful, action-filled programs.

By using computer reading software children can:

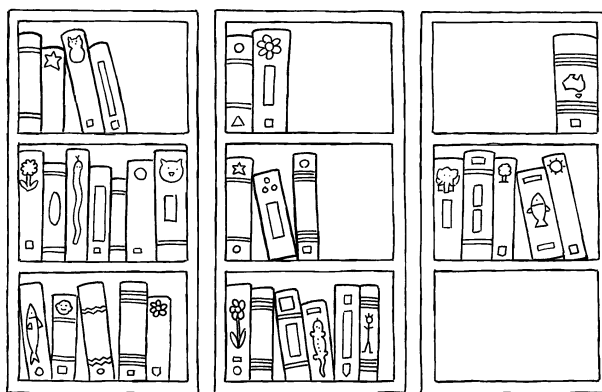
- hear stories, read along and 'read' by themselves
- play with objects and characters on the screen to learn about the alphabet, simple words, rhyming words and other skills important in learning to read
- command the computer with his/her voice, record and then play back the recording
- write simple sentences and make up stories and have them read back
- add pictures and characters to stories
- make and print their own books
- receive praise and see improvement in language abilities.



Using the Library

Visiting the library is a great way to encourage your child's imagination and learning as well as providing an opportunity for you to show your child that you value books and reading.

- Make library visits a regular activity.
- Get a library card for yourself and your child.
- Show your child how to locate the children's section of the library.
- Help your child select books.
- Attend library storytelling time whenever possible.
- Spend time browsing the books at the library.



Supporting Phonemic Awareness and Graphophonic Knowledge Through Games

'I Spy ...'

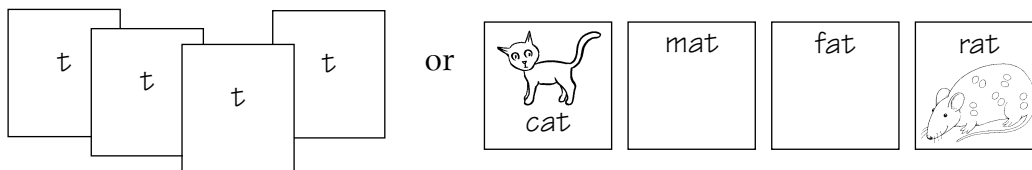
- Begin by saying "I spy with my little eye something that ...", and continue by adding 'begins with t', or 'rhymes with bear', or 'ends with at'.
- Invite your child to guess the word.

A variation is Where's Spot? in which a toy dog is hidden. If your child finds I Spy too difficult, modify it to Where's Spot? Choose a hiding place, such as a box and say, for instance, "Spot's hiding somewhere that starts with /b/. "Where could that be?" Have your child look to see if Spot is in the place guessed.

Snap

Use the format of a traditional Snap game.

- Make up a set of cards that match in some way, e.g.



- Deal out all the cards to the players.
- In turns, each player overturns one card from his or her hand and places it face up on the table, forming a central pile.
- When an overturned card matches the one on top of the central pile, that player places his or her hand on the central pile, says SNAP, and gives the category for the Snap. The player then takes all of the cards to add to his/her hand.
- Play continues in this way until one player has all the cards.

Concentration

Concentration is a game that invites players to exercise concentration and memory to locate matches from a given selection of cards placed face down. The cards used for Snap can also be used for Concentration.

- Make a set of cards with letters/words or pictures. The cards could include:
 - Pictures of objects that begin with the same letter, e.g. *box and balloon, cat and computer, man and moon*
 - Pictures of objects that rhyme, e.g. *cat and bat, moon and spoon, goat and boat*
 - Words of different lengths. (Note: your child shouldn't be expected to read the words — just notice whether they are long or short.)
- Place all cards in the pack face down on the table.
- In turns, each player overturns two cards (one at a time), attempting to match them in some way, e.g. *they rhyme, start with the same letter.*

- If there is a match, the player states what that is, keeps the cards and has another turn. If there is no match, the cards are replaced exactly where they were, face down.
- The game continues in this way until all the cards are matched. The winner is the player with the most matched pairs.

A Trip to the Moon

- Begin the game by saying “We’re going on a trip to the moon. You can come if you bring *something*.” The ‘something’ will depend on the category you choose, e.g.
matching – “You need to bring something that starts with ‘s’.”
rhymes – “You need to bring something that rhymes with “van’.”
- Have players take turns to say “I will bring a ...”
- Continue the game for a specified length of time or until the choices have run out.

Shopping

Children learn to identify products at a very early age. Let them assist you when doing the shopping, e.g. “*We need cereal; can you find the Cornflakes?*”

Read recipes and write down the ingredients. Help your child find the required ingredients at the shop.

Get your child to cut out pictures from advertising catalogues and then find the matching items when you go shopping.