

# Helping Children with Reading



**You can make a difference to a child's reading journey. Your role as an advocate for your children's reading success cannot be overestimated. It has a direct impact on the ease and confidence with which they pursue their reading and writing.**

The joy and love of sharing a book on a regular basis sets the foundation for their reading success, and ensures

that reading is given the priority it deserves. Reading regularly with someone who cares is the inspiration that all readers deserve.

## **Mentoring is all about relationships.**

### **Relationship building**

At the core of reading is a relationship and it is the bond between children and their mentors that is enhanced through reading together.

### **Children's reading improves**

The research is conclusive: When parents successfully support their children's literacy learning from an early age, everyone benefits. When parents/carers are too busy to undertake regular reading with their child, the SVPACT volunteer can assist to support children's reading and academic success so that learning outcomes for the child improve.

### **Children need to read more**

Children need to understand how books work and have many more exposures to text types and vocabulary.

### **Children's self-esteem improves**

Knowing someone cares enough to take time out of a busy schedule to give their undivided attention around a book, makes a significant difference to how students perceive themselves as learners and readers. When mentors show an interest in a child's learning, the child usually responds positively.

## Strategies every mentor needs to know

The following strategies work for young children through to adults. The only difference is the book choice of the reader.

These strategies are useful when children choose books beyond their instructional levels. They choose books they want to read but as yet, cannot read them independently. Before introducing these strategies, it is always best to allow the reader to read for a few minutes while monitoring the miscues. After a few minutes of reading aloud, and when a pattern in the miscues indicates that meaning is lost and reading is laboured, show the reader any of the following strategies. I usually introduce echo and shared together and then ask the reader to choose. These strategies are not hierarchical. They all offer layers of support to give the reader access to the book of his/her choice. Remember, the reader always holds the book.

### Echo reading

Echo reading is simply, mentor reads a sentence, paragraph or page (depending on the text) and the child repeats it back. Before starting, negotiate with the child to read a sentence, paragraph or page. The mentor reads first. The child re-reads (echoes) the sentence, paragraph or page. Continue in this way to complete the book. Echo reading eliminates the frustration and anxiety that is too often associated with reading aloud. It often happens that once the child becomes confident with the book, author's style, and language, he or she does not stop for the mentor to take a turn – ultimately, that is the goal – independence. If it does not happen that the child takes over, echo reading is effective. By 'echoing' your reading, the child has an opportunity to sound like a fluent reader. This is important in building a child's sense of what it feels like and sounds like to be a good reader. The child feels confident, relaxed and enjoys the experience. It is about comprehension and having fun with a good book. During echo reading, mentors model good reading. When mentors miscue, they share the experience. This allows the child to see that all readers make miscues and self-correct.

### Shared reading

With shared reading, the mentor reads, the child reads. They take turns to read. The mentor negotiates with the child to read a sentence, paragraph or page depending on the book. When the mentor reads, any loss of meaning, misunderstandings or mispronunciations that have been made by the child are rectified without drawing attention to the child's miscues. When the child comes to unfamiliar words, he/she will hear it read correctly by the mentor and will automatically self-correct the next time the word appears. Shared reading ensures that comprehension is maintained. Shared reading eliminates the frustration of reading because the mentor is a partner in the reading of the selected text.

### Neurological Impress Method (NIM)

The child reads aloud 'mimicking' the words of the text as the mentor reads aloud. The child reads a couple of words behind the mentor. The mentor tracks with a finger so the child can keep up. It is important to avoid word pointing – instead, the mentor's finger moves across the line in a fluid movement. The only reason, the mentor tracks is because children get distracted and when they drop back into the reading, they know where the mentor is reading. The mentor reads at a normal reading pace. When the child looks away from the book, the mentor does not stop reading. Continue with enthusiasm and the child will return to the book. When using NIM, the child has an

opportunity to sound like a fluent reader. This is important in building a child's sense of what it feels like and sounds like to be a good reader. The child sounds like a fluent reader and builds confidence and trust. There is no stress and angst.

## Paired reading

Paired reading is an effective support for readers who ignore punctuation, read in a monotone, and/or extremely quickly or slowly. It is also a good strategy when children choose to read their favourite book for the 55th time. Just read it together and love it one more time. Paired reading is simply reading together at the same pace and in the same place. The mentor reads in a normal reading voice. It usually takes a couple of sentences for both readers to fall into sync. It is like dancing with a partner and it might feel a little awkward until a common rhythm and rhyme are reached. The child holds the book, turns the pages and enjoys the time together.

## Learning to spell

### What we need to know

Spelling is a tool for writing. Reading, writing and spelling are interconnected. Readers and writers are constantly building up images of how words look. Writers become conscious users and consumers of words. They take notice of words in the books they read and the words they see in their environment. Good spellers are resourceful. When they notice that a word does not look right, they experiment and substitute other letters, find the word in a book, a magazine, the environment, the dictionary, use the spell checker, or ask someone.

What SVPACT mentors can do to improve Spelling

- Draw attention to words in the books you read together, for example: '*Look at those two words ... they almost are identical except for the last letter*'; '*That word is really long*'; '*That word is French*'; '*That word has three syllables in it*'; '*Those two words rhyme*'.
- Play games with spelling. Play games like Scrabble, crosswords, Hangman, making words with magnetic letters, , words that can be spelled the same forward and backwards. Simple word searches are a great way to practice spelling.
- Play word games like thinking of rhyming words, opposites, or words that sound like their meanings.
- Point out unusual words in the books you read together.
- Children learn to spell by writing and noticing words when they read. Make reading and writing an integral part of your child's day.

**This material has been adapted from the *Parent's Guide to helping children with reading and writing at home* by Kaye Lowe. This resource is available on the Primary English Teaching Association Australia website at [www.petaa.edu.au](http://www.petaa.edu.au)**

## Some useful websites:

### Word Search for Kids

<https://www.puzzles-to-print.com/word-searches-for-kids/>

- ❖ **Explore new worlds of knowledge.** Many times the hidden words are centred around a topic of interest. Some of these are just for fun, but a topic can also introduce essential vocabulary that every child should possess.
- ❖ **Improve spelling.** Just by searching for a word, puzzlers are learning to spell. In fact they are rehearsing the spelling over and over in their minds as they look for the letters the word contains.
- ❖ **Improve concentration.** A valuable and increasingly rare skill, concentration is required to successfully complete these or just about any puzzle. They really do encourage the brain to stay focused.
- ❖ **Enhance visual acuity.** Eyes that are trained regularly to look for small details will be stronger and more effective in many situations.

### Cool 2B Kids

<https://www.cool2bkids.com/1st-grade-word-search/>

At this site you can select and print off word search activities for students at every grade level in the primary school.

### Education.com

At [Education.com](https://www.education.com) you can download activities to enable children to learn to write, read and spell cvc words. You can find them here: <https://www.education.com/slideshow/cvc-word-reading-and-writing/>

CVC words are words that have the pattern consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC, like the words *cat* and *mop*.

Since CVC words are so easy to decode, they are perfect for students learning how to read. Students usually learn letter sounds first, and these are easy to apply with CVC words since they are short and straightforward.

