

TIPS ON HOW TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S ENGLISH

- ☑ Watch age appropriate English programmes and videos.
- ☑ Play word games such as Scrabble, Boggle, Bingo, Spellmaster, etc.
- ☑ Read to your child - even older children enjoy being read to.
- ☑ Have your child read to you - without correction.
- ☑ Make a variety of appropriate reading materials available to your child e.g. magazines, fiction and non-fiction books, comics, etc.
- ☑ Let your child choose books that he / she is interested in.
- ☑ Sing songs, read rhymes and riddles.
- ☑ Buy toys and games that will assist your child's English e.g. blocks with letters of the alphabet on them.
- ☑ Speak English.
- ☑ Read rhyme and rhythm type stories.
- ☑ Encourage your child to read English in his / her every day environment e.g. signs, posters, labels in the supermarket, street names, etc.
- ☑ Label household objects.
- ☑ Encourage your child to listen to the radio.
- ☑ Encourage and praise your child.
- ☑ Discuss stories and programmes that your child has read or seen e.g. talk about the characters, ask about your child's opinion, make sure your child knows what the story is about.
- ☑ Avoid interrogation - e.g. What did you do at school today? and instead question in a focused manner e.g. What was the funniest thing that happened today?

TIPS ON HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD READ MORE FLUENTLY

- ☑ Learning to read and to read well can be a long process, requiring patience and dedication from both the child AND the parents. Parents play an important role in forming the child's attitude towards learning.
- ☑ One of the best and most pleasant ways of encouraging your child to read is to read to him. Read to your child every day or as often as possible, because not only does your child learn that reading is enjoyable and interesting, but he also hears the way words are pronounced and listens to the way words flow when read by a fluent reader. If both parents are non-English speaking, then perhaps an older sibling or another family member could help.
- ☑ Set aside a time every day to be your "reading-time". It could be in the morning or after dinner, but make sure it is a quiet time and that the child understands he is to sit with you during this time. Ideally both parents should share this task. Never push your child during this time. If he is interested for only 5 minutes then that is 5 minutes of valuable time in learning to read. Children can be easily discouraged when learning to read and your time is best spent helping your child build an interest in books.
- ☑ Try to discover your child's interests, e.g. trucks, sea animals, then find books on those subjects. Your local or school library will be a good place to start. K1, K2, P1 and P2 children need books with large interesting pictures and a small amount of text. Let other members of the family join in, particularly younger siblings. Older children should be taken to book shops or second hand book shops and encouraged to buy their own choice of books.
- ☑ Sharing a book with your child has many real benefits for his learning; it provides him with a time to ask questions about things he doesn't understand, to learn new words and their meanings, to discover interesting facts about his world and to enlarge his general knowledge. Give your child time to point out things that he recognises or that interest him, and use these things as discussion points.

PRACTICAL IDEAS:

- ☑ Focus your child's attention on the words (the text). You may glide your fingers under the words as you read so as to demonstrate left to right reading and draw attention to the fact that the symbols (letters and words) have meaning. However, once your child has become a proficient reader encourage him not to use his finger as this will only slow him down.
- ☑ When your child points out something of interest in the story, show him the word. Try to find this word on other pages. Make a game of this; your child could clap each time he hears the word, or count how many times the word is used in the story.
- ☑ Look for small words in bigger words.
- ☑ Choose a letter and find words that start or finish with that letter; e.g. the initial letter of your child's name.
- ☑ Let your child choose the story and there is no problem if he chooses the same one regularly. The child is building a love of books and his enjoyment and word knowledge is improved every time the story is read.
- ☑ Before the end of the story stop and ask the child what he thinks the ending will be. Prediction is an important reading skill. You could also try asking your child to guess what the next word in a sentence will be, this is "cloze". To start, use simple words that have an obvious place in the sentence, or are connected to the picture; e.g. "The boy sat on the _____". Encourage your child to make up a different ending to a well-liked story. This is composition practice.
- ☑ Ask your child questions about the story he has just read. This is comprehension practice. Try to find out if your child has understood what he has read. Ask your child why he thinks the character may have done or said something, ask what your child thought of the book, did he like the story? Why? Why not?

All these ideas will work best when done in a caring and non-threatening environment. Children cannot be pushed, threatened, bribed or beaten into being good readers. As parents you should be encouraging a love of reading and the skills will flow naturally from this. Enhancing your child's reading ability will take time, YOUR time. You must be prepared to sit with your child for a period every day. Even the busiest people can MAKE time for something as important as their children.