



Booktrust's Top Tips for Bedtime Reading with Children Starting to Read by Themselves

Sharing a story at bedtime is a chance for you and your child to relax and enjoy a special moment together. Children will benefit immensely if you read aloud with them, even once they have started to read themselves. They will learn new words that are beyond their reading ability and will love the time you spend with them. Try to read the books brought home from school and books you have at home; maybe borrowed from the library. Make it something to look forward to — and remember to have fun!

- Cuddle up close together - it doesn't have to be in bed. Being physically close is still important as children get older. Try to make sure there aren't any distractions — best to switch off the TV.
- If your child brings a reading book home from school, encourage them to share their book with you first, so that you can help with any words they find difficult.
- Share books with rhyme, rhythm and repetition – hearing rhyming words will encourage them to join in. Let a child say words out loud and leave space in the story for them to fill in.
- Try telling a story. Children love old classics like fairy tales, or you could make one up together.
- Share fiction books, poetry and books about things that excite them like trains, diggers, fairies. “Talk about books” are books that don't have a story, so that you can talk about the subject and pictures.
- You don't always have to “read” a book. Pictures are very important and help to tell the story.
- Point to the pictures and talk about them. Discussing the book encourages your child to become the story teller. Try asking questions like: 'Can you tell me what happened to ...' 'What do you think will happen next?' 'How do you think she feels about that?' 'Tell me what's happening in this picture....'
- Let them ask questions - it's a great way for children to learn to understand what's happening in a story – an essential part of learning to read.
- It's great to relate a story to real life: 'Do you remember when we saw a dog like that...?'
- Involve your child by letting them choose the books they want you to read with them. You can sometimes limit the choice, so that you get a bit of variety too!
- Children love to revisit stories they enjoyed when they were younger. This is a sure sign that they have enjoyed you reading aloud to them and they may have a go at reading some of them to you. If a child keeps asking you to read the same book again and again, celebrate! You have a child who loves books and who is on the way to becoming an enthusiastic reader.

For more tips and advice on great rhymes and books to share with your child visit our website at www.bedtimereading.org.uk