

Paired Reading

A Guide for Parents

Introduction

Paired Reading is a very good way for parents to help with their children's reading. It works really well with most children, improving their reading skills. Most children enjoy Paired Reading and it helps them want to read.

Paired Reading allows a child to be successful and is, therefore, particularly useful for children who:

- find reading difficult
- do not feel confident about reading
- are reluctant to read

How to do Paired Reading

Paired Reading has 2 steps:

Step 1 - Reading Together

You and your child **both** read the words out loud **together**. Keep a steady pace but don't go too fast. At first, your child may read the words just after you. Try to make your speed as fast or as slow as your child's.

Your child must read every word. If your child struggles and then gets it right, show you are pleased. **But** don't let your child struggle for more than 3 or 4 seconds.

If your child struggles for longer than 3 or 4 seconds or makes a mistake, then you **must**:

- ✓ say the correct word yourself, and
- ✓ make sure your child says the correct word as well.

Make sure your child **looks** at the words. It can help if one of you points to the word you are both reading with a finger. It is best if your child does the pointing.

Step 2 - Reading Alone

When you are Reading Together and your child feels confident, they might want to read some of the book on their own. When your child is confident you can either

- gradually lower your voice until your child is reading on their own, or
- agree on a way for your child to signal to you to be quiet. This could be a knock, a sign or a squeeze. (You **don't** want your child to have to say "be quiet", or your child will lose track of the reading). When they make this signal you stop reading straight away and they carry on reading on their own.

If your child struggles for more than 3 or 4 seconds, or makes a mistake, you read the correct word out loud and make sure your child then says the correct word as well.

Then you go back to reading together until your child again feels confident enough to read alone, and again asks you to be quiet, or you begin to gradually lower your voice.

What you need

- **Books**

Your child should choose the book. Children learn to read more easily from books they like. Don't worry if the book seems too hard. Your child will soon get used to picking books that are at the right level and you can help as much as necessary. If they get fed up with a book, and want to change it, that's fine. Only read a book again if your child wants to.

Show interest in the book your child has chosen. Talk about the pictures. Talk about what happens in the book as your child goes through it. It's best if you talk at the end of a page or section, or your child might lose the track of the story. Ask what your child thinks might happen next. Listen to your child - don't do all the talking yourself.

- **Time**

It is best to try to do Paired Reading every day. You can do as little as 5 minutes each day. Don't do more than 15 minutes unless **your child** asks to carry on.

If you do not have time to do Paired Reading every day, grandparents, older brothers or sisters can help. They must do the Paired Reading in just the same way.

Don't make children do Paired Reading when they really want to do something else.

- **Place**

Try to find a place that is quiet. It is difficult for children to read when it is noisy, or when there is a lot going on. Move away from the T.V. or turn it off. You need to find a place that is comfortable and allows both of you to look carefully at the book.

- **A New Way of Reading**

With Paired Reading, the hardest things for parents to get used to are:

- When your child gets a word wrong, you just **tell** your child what the word says. Then your child says it after you. You **don't** make the child struggle, 'break it up' or 'sound it out'.
- When your child gets the word **right**, you smile, show you are pleased, say "good" or "well done". You **don't** fuss about the words your child gets wrong.

- **Notes**

It will help your child's teacher if you keep a note each day of what has been read, and how your child is getting on. At the end of the week your child can show their teacher the notes and receive extra praise for their efforts, which will help to keep them keen.