

Mrs Dowdell's Parenting Pointer

Reading for pleasure

Reading with our children has huge benefits. Not only does it help them in their learning but it also builds our relationship with them, boosts their self-esteem, helps them to problem solve, enables parents to discover what children have learnt, creates a shared experience to look back on and can instil a love of books in our children.



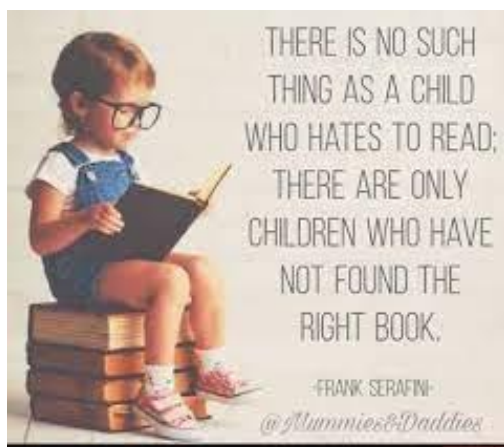
If there are all these benefits to reading with our children why is it sometimes hard to find the time or make the effort? How much time do we spend reading with our children, compared with how much time we spend watching TV, or looking at our phones? Do our children spend lots of their free time playing on computer games? None of those things are bad but can we redress the balance a bit? Let's make time to read together. Here are some ideas that might help ...

Sometimes we want to read a story with our children for the sheer pleasure that it brings and other times we might want to create a more intentional learning experience. Think about this when it's time to sit down and share a book. What is the purpose of this time? Is it a time to listen to our child read to us and help them to sound out words? Is it a time for us to read to them? Can we think of questions we can ask to expand the story and get our children to predict what might happen next? Will we take it in turns to read a page each or a sentence each? Perhaps we could get our child to spot any words or sounds they recognise as we read along together.

Do we have memories of books we enjoyed as children and look forward to sharing with our own children? I have very fond memories of reading "The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe" out loud to my 3 girls during one summer holiday. By that time at least 2 of them were able to read for themselves but the shared experience made this a really special time.

Often children love to hear the same book again and again and again. This may be really boring for us but children find great comfort in repetition and are also learning about the structure of a story. Even before children can read every word on the page, they can retell a familiar story by looking at the pictures and remembering what you have said. This will really help them to become story makers as they get older. Different children appreciate different types of books such as factual or information books, fantasy books, poems or fairy stories. You know your child best, what sort of books interest them? If you haven't

discovered what they like yet, maybe ask other parents what their children enjoy reading and share some ideas or arrange a book swap.



We can model reading in lots of different contexts; a recipe or set of instructions, reading the information on the side of a cereal packet in the supermarket, road signs, billboards, newspapers etc. One parent told me that she had to explain to her children that when she was using her Kindle, she wasn't having screen time but reading a book. She felt it was really important that they saw that she enjoys reading for pleasure. If we put a high value on reading, our children will too.

Got any questions? Need any help or advice? Please e-mail me at parenting@foundrylanprimary.co.uk