

Forest Park School



Parent Workshop

Supporting Children's Reading Development

Early Years and KS1

What is Shared Reading?

Shared reading is what you'd probably expect - reading aloud to a group of children. Formally established in 1979 by reading expert Don Holdaway (the technique is often referred to as "Holdaway's Method"), shared reading has been a feature in homes, playgroups, and schools for several generations

Typically, shared reading involves a parent or educator reading from a large book with colourful illustrations and bold, easy-to-see typeface. The children gather around the adult (or child reader, when appropriate), listening to the story. However, to make the process effective as more than a simple way to pass the time, it's crucial that the educator, mum, dad, guardian, babysitter, or grandparent turn the experience into something more involved.

The best way to achieve this goal when shared reading is to plan to re-read the same book on a number of different occasions with a variety of intentions each time the story is read. For instance, consider the following shared reading agenda with a fictitious book called "The Big Blue Bunny":

Scenario

Day One: Shows your child the book "The Big Blue Bunny". Discuss the cover picture and talk about what they think will happen inside the book based on the illustration and the title.

Read "The Big Blue Bunny", pausing at each page so your child has the opportunity to notice the pictures and text. Occasionally, ask questions, such as, "Why did Blue Bunny run so fast?" or "Have you ever felt sad like Blue Bunny does?"

After reading "The Big Blue Bunny", ask a few contextual questions about the story, then put the book in a place where your child can look through it on their own time (see the article on "Independent Reading"), if desired.

Day Two: Announce that you will be reading "The Big Blue Bunny" again. Then, ask your child what they remember about the story.

During the second reading of "The Big Blue Bunny", pays special attention to words and letters, asking your child to identify them. If they know their sounds, they can even help determine some of the words on the pages.

After the story, talk more in depth about "The Big Blue Bunny" and asks what they liked or didn't like about it and why.

Day Three: Reads "The Big Blue Bunny" again. By this point, listeners know what will happen. Many children will "echo" you, and repeat your words. They may also finish the sentences (especially those which rhyme or are predictable.) This should be encouraged to help them verbalise.

After reading "The Big Blue Bunny", encourage your child to tell or write a new ending to the story. (Alternately, they can write a new book starring "The Big Blue Bunny" or another character from the tale.) Offer lots of help, and encourage illustrations.

Benefits of Shared Reading

Agendas such as the one above allow children who are learning to read to have a shared experience in a comfortable, non-judgmental setting. Their involvement in reading is on many levels and includes comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, language development, word identification, and pure literary enjoyment. Additionally, youngsters' imaginations are developed using the shared reading technique.

Shared reading has been used in libraries, schools, and homes for quite some time; so why not try it the next time you have two or more kids clamouring for a story? It's a fun, exciting way to bring the written word to life for both you and your little learners

As you're sitting here reading this article, chances are that you aren't thinking for long about each individual word. You're simply recognizing the words "on sight" because they are familiar to you. Hence, you are "sight reading".

For children, sight word recognition is an important step to being able to efficiently learn to read. If they don't have to stop and consider what each word is, they will have the freedom to comprehend the meaning and context of sentences and paragraphs. Consequently, it's critical for parents, babysitters, guardians, grandparents and educators to help beginning readers learn to instantly identify words.

In order to assist the child in your life in reaching this kind of reading fluidity, there are several techniques and games you can utilize, including those listed below:

- Flashcards can be a powerful ally in your son, daughter or student's ability to read words without having to "sound them out" or even think about them on a conscious level. Start by making your own flashcards containing commonly used words such as "and", "the", "but", et cetera. On a regular basis, flip through the flashcards with your child, helping him or her to

become familiar with the way certain words look. Once he or she has mastered a group of words, make sure to "mix it up" and make new flashcards to ensure that your child continues to learn and grow. (But go back to the old flashcards periodically, too, to make sure those sight words aren't forgotten!)

- As you're reading together, pick out the sight words you and your youngster have studied and learned. Ask him or her, "What is this word?" Then, wait patiently as he or she tries to decide upon the right answer. (Patience is essential!) The more you do this, the more your child will begin to effortlessly read. You'll also be able to determine which words seem to be difficult for your son or daughter. Then, you can spend time on those "sticklers" to further your child's literacy level.
- If your youngster is old enough to comfortably hold a pen, crayon, marker or pencil, have him or her first trace some simple sight words, then reproduce them "freehand" by him- or herself. The more times this is practiced, the easier it will become... and your child will soon recognize those sight words the moment he or she encounters them. This will also help him or her identify sight words whether they are written in capital letters, small letters, or a mixture of both.
- Write a very short story (one or two sentences will suffice) using mainly sight words. Have your child read the story aloud to you. From there, you can gauge which sight words are "sticking" and which seem to be potential trouble spots. As your youngster's confidence grows, you can begin to write stories together with more complex sight words to improve his or her literacy even further

Remember, though, that sight reading is a process - it's not an overnight destination, but a journey. So be open to your child's mistakes and learning from his or her trials and errors; after all, even adults cannot possibly know every word in their native tongues. Most of all, have fun with this experience, as it can be a magical, rewarding time for you both

Though you've probably heard of the phonics method of teaching children and adults to read, you may not be familiar with what "synthetic phonics" (as opposed to other types of phonics programmes) entails. Generally speaking, most parents and guardians may use some form of synthetic phonics, but they are probably not being true to the process in its entirety.

Synthetic phonics is now the preferred method of learning to read in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world. In a nutshell, it uses sounds (phonemes) instead of letters to help students blend (or "synthesize") words.

Surprisingly, children who are taught using this technique do not have to know (and preferably should not know) their alphabets until well after they learn the 44 phonemes (19 vowels and 25 consonants) that comprise the English language. Thus, starting off with the ABCs (commonplace in many homes) is actually in direct contrast to what synthetic phonic researchers suggest.

Instead, educators and parents wishing to use synthetic phonics should begin their child's journey into literacy by introducing him or her to different sounds rather than letter names. Therefore, the letter "m" is not learned, but the sound /m/ is. Similarly, the letter "f" is avoided but the sound /f/ is used. This ensures that children who are putting sounds together are not confusing letter names with the sounds the letters represents (which can often be different, as in the case of "double-u" and its actual sound, /w/

Proponents of synthetic phonics have shown that children who are given a few phonemes to learn per day generally are able to "blend" them together to make words rather quickly. Even children with special needs (autism, ADD/ADHD, Asperger's syndrome, et cetera) seem to respond positively to this technique. Instead of worrying about spelling and the letter names, the children simply synthesize sounds to form words.

For instance, if a child's taught the phonemes /k/, /a/, and /t/, he or she can quickly learn to "sound out" the word "cat". Though the phonic spelling (k-a-t) does not match the English spelling of "c-a-t", the child is still learning that words are made up of more than letters and that one letter can represent different sounds.

Eventually, children should be able to relatively efficiently and effectively begin to put sounds together, reading "books" and evolving their comprehension skills. From there, they can learn the alphabet song (A, B, C, D... et cetera) and proper spelling and punctuation to achieve fluency in their tongues.

Guided Reading

The technique known as "guided reading" actually falls between the processes of "shared reading" and "independent reading". Thus it's an excellent "stepping stone" that can be used by teachers.

In schools, guided reading is usually conducted in small groups of no more than half-a-dozen youngsters. Each girl or boy spends approximately fifteen minutes (again, this is dependent upon the readers' ages) reading an age-appropriate book or magazine to him or herself. The adult in the room is available to help with questions, but does not read the book for the child.

Like a coach, the educator provides encouragement and reminds the child of spelling and grammar rules; however, he or she must resist the temptation to simply read the entire text for the youngster. After all, the point of the exercise is to move a child from "shared" reading to "independent" reading.

Benefits of Guided Reading

Guided reading helps boys and girls on a number of different levels, most notably the seven below.

- Children begin to look for "sight cues". For instance, if a book is about a rabbit and the child is having difficulty with the word "carrot", the teacher might help guide the child to decipher the term using pictures on the page as a guide.
- Guided reading provides good practice in reading from left to right. Of course, this isn't the case in all languages, but for the purposes of this article, we'll be focusing on English. Many children do not naturally have a tendency to read in this manner; consequently, guided reading can get them accustomed to doing so.
- Guided reading offers children the opportunity to begin to memorise and recognise common words. An example would be "the", which is frequently used in English. Eventually, the child who is learning to read should get to the point when he or she isn't "sounding out" many words that are familiar, but is merely reading them without pausing.
- The experience of guided reading can be helpful in understanding the concept of "sequencing." Most tales have a beginning, middle, and ending; to adults, that's completely expected. However, youngsters have to be taught this technique of storytelling. Guided reading can provide a fabulous opportunity for such sequential understanding to begin.
- Children are forced to deal with punctuation when they are involved in guided reading. They learn that exclamation points indicate excitement and that a full stop ends a sentence. Often, they are confused at first by

commas, quotation marks, and even question marks, but with a teacher's help, they can soon become familiar with such conventions of the English language.

- Guided reading gives children the chance to correct their own errors. Often, when children make mistakes, adults quickly try to "fix" the problem. But the point of guided reading is for the coach (a.k.a. mum, dad, or instructor) to empower the youngster to self-correct.
- Finally, guided reading gives kids the practice and confidence needed to become literate. Without an opportunity to work on their own in a non-judgmental environment, they might not be able to achieve the goal of literacy as quickly.

So the next time your child asks for you to read a book to him or her, you might want to say, "Why don't you read it to yourself for a few minutes first?" That way, you'll be providing support and showing your youngster that you believe in his or her abilities.

How often does the child in your life automatically pick up a book magazine, newspaper, comic, or other printed material simply for the pleasure of opening his or her mind? Believe it or not, that act of independent reading could mean the difference between lifelong reading achievement and a lifetime of struggling with literacy.

Experts have begun to realise that a young person's interest in independent reading seems to be a prime indicator of long-term success. Many studies have shown a direct correlation between the desire to independently pick up a book and good grades in school. However, not all children will naturally gravitate toward the act of reading for information or pleasure.

That's where you as a parent or we as educators come into the scene.

Encouraging Independent Reading

First, understand that independent reading is not guided or shared reading. You may be present in the room with your son, daughter, or student, but you will not be engaged in reading the book for your child. (But you can absolutely help if he or she is stumped by a word now and then.)

Instead, your child should be picking up a book on his or her own, whether or not he or she can read all the words. A prime example of this is the three-year-old who cannot read but who enjoys sitting on a chair and thumbing through favourite books or magazines.

Not only does this kind of spontaneous independent reading increase a child's imagination, retention, focus, comprehension, word identification, fluency, and vocabulary, but it also allows him or her to build interest in a subject or variety of diverse subjects. For example, if he or she finds the Roman Empire fascinating, independently reading about that time period and historical era could broaden his or her understanding of society today.

One of the best ways to stimulate a youngster's interest in independent reading is to become an avid independent reader yourself. Turn off the television and open the newspaper. Take time at the end of the day as a family to listen to music and enjoy some free reading moments. The more you do it yourself, the more likely your offspring will be to accept it as a proper, regular thing to do. (Children are wonderful mimics!)

You can also begin building your child's personal "library" (or, if money is a factor, you can always borrow books from a school or local library once a week.) That way, he or she will have many choices of books to peruse during independent reading.

Remember that reading achievement is linked to a love of independent reading. So the next time your son or daughter picks up a book, allow him or her to have some private moments. You'll never regret your decision to embrace independent reading.

GENERAL ADVICE

Make Reading a Positive Experience

It's hard enough for some children to figure out how to read - what they absolutely do not need is someone making them feel defeated or "bad" about their stumbling blocks.

Read with Your Child

One of the best ways to make reading a wonderful, magical, intimate experience is to take time out of your busy schedule every day to read to (or with) your child. Make this a special bonding experience for both you and your special youngster and he or she will be more likely to think of reading as a warm, lovely event.

Make Sure That You Are Reading

Children imitate the adults in their lives, whether those grown-ups are their mums, dads, or teachers. Therefore, if you want your youngster to read, you'll have to read yourself. (Even if you only read the newspaper in the morning) Be sure to explain to your child how interesting it is to be able to find out about the world around you. That way, he or she will see the act as natural.

Ask Your Child to Read to You

Children who are just learning to read need to have opportunities to showcase their newfound abilities; therefore, why not ask your son, or daughter to read to you? Even if your little one is only "making up" the story or reading very simple words, that's perfectly fine. The aim of this exercise isn't for him or her to be perfect - it's to build his or her confidence. It's not just books. Point out all the words around you: labels on food, street signs, etc.

And finally

Keep in touch with us, ask for suggestions on how you can help with reading and writing.

HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN

Learning Styles

Generally, most experts give credence to three specific learning styles - auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. Though most individuals use an amalgamation of each (rather than only using one or two styles), there is typically one that holds a stronger appeal for each person. To help you better understand your child in order to pave the way for a positive, rewarding "learning to read" experience, we've compiled some general indicators of the styles as well as hints for teaching each style below.

Auditory Learners

How to Spot Them: Auditory learners tend to think in terms of sounds. These are the children who only have to hear something once and will remember what was said.

How to Teach Them to Read: Auditory learners do well when taught how to read phonetically, using organised linear patterns, as their thinking is very sequential in nature. But they may have trouble if asked to complete exclusively visual tasks.

Helpful Tips: About 10-25% of all learners could be labelled as auditory.

Visual Learners

How to Spot Them: Visual learners tend to think in "pictures". Chances are good that their retention will be low.

How to Teach Them to Read: Because visual learners use their eyes so heavily, they need to be able to see something (such as a picture). If you have this kind of child, he or she may memorise words as a whole rather than learning phonetically how to put sounds together.

Helpful Tips: About 33-40% of all learners fall into this category. Usually, they like to sit in the front row where they can "read" the teacher's body language as he or she speaks.

Kinesthetic Learners

How to Spot Them: Kinesthetic learners tend to be hands-on. If a kinesthetic person is asked to describe the word "fluff", he or she will probably talk about what "fluff" feels like, not what the word sounds or looks like.

How to Teach Them to Read: Because kinesthetic learners have to always be "doing" (rather than hearing or seeing), blocks or other easily manipulated objects and physical aids are suggested during reading classes or sessions. These tactile children work best in an atmosphere where they can dance, move, and play while exploring how to read.

Helpful Tips: Approximately 42-50% of all learners are classified as primarily "kinesthetic". Some children who are actually kinesthetic learners may be mislabelled as having ADD or ADHD.

WEB BASED RESOURCES

Book Box [Channel 4 Book Box](#) The site that puts you in touch with your favourite authors.

Scholastic www.scholastic.com/kids/ Scholastic's world of fun includes Harry Potter, Goosebumps and Captain Underpants.

Poetry Archive www.poetryarchive.org/childrensarchive/home.do
poems, poets, poetry - you get the picture

Thomas the Tank Engine

["//www.hitentertainment.com/thomasthetankengine/uk/home/homepage.html"](http://www.hitentertainment.com/thomasthetankengine/uk/home/homepage.html)

Visit Thomas and his friends. Find your favourite character in the Engine Depot.

Hobbit and Elf Names www.chriswetherell.com/hobbit/ discover your other hobbit and elf self.

Harper Collins www.harperchildrens.com/hch/

Tons of book info, quizzes, competitions from the publishers, Harper Collins.

Witch Child www.witchchild.com Celia Rees wrote a book and that book was called Witch Child. Guess what the websites called???! All about the author, the book, it's sequel Sorceress and their historical background.

Barrington Stoke www.barringtonstoke.co.uk Read snippets from Barrington Stoke's new books for children and meet the authors.

Animal Ark www.animalark.co.uk A must for fans of the Animal Ark series - where animals come first.

Puffin www.puffin.co.uk Check out Puffin picks and author info.

Dr Seuss www.seussville.com Green eggs and ham and crazy fun with Dr. Seuss.

Narnia www.narnia.com Meet the people and tour the lands of Narnia.

My Home Library www.myhomelibrary.org Create your own home library - some people can find the fun in anything! Seriously, if you love reading you'll love this site.

ACHUKA www.achuka.co.uk/index2.php Book reviews, competitions and links to other sites.

Stories from the Web www.storiesfromtheweb.org Stories and poems to read online and if you've read them all, you can write a story of your own.

Mrs Mad's Book-a-Rama www.mrsmad.com Mrs Mad has all the latest books. Try the bookshelf if you fancy a browse.

Reading Matters www.readingmatters.co.uk This one's for "intelligent young readers" but I still enjoyed it.

Harry Potter www.harrypotter.warnerbros.co.uk/home.html All things Potter I do believe.

Reading is Fundamental www.rif.org.uk There's lots of interviews with authors on this site and you can win stuff by entering the competitions.

Reading Club www.readingclub.org.uk You can post your own stories on this site and they have links to all your favourite author's sites.

Kid's Space www.kids-space.org Stories and tales from around the world (and much more.)