Parents as Partners in Children’s Early Reading

What all parents need – regardless of their background and their own experiences of school – is the confidence to engage in their child’s learning.

Ten top tips for encouraging parents to be involved in supporting their child’s reading development at home

1. Invite parents to a meeting about how you teach reading through phonics and into independent reading. As part of the evening, have a professional storyteller tell a story to the parents, to model the impact of reading and sharing stories aloud.

2. Encourage parents to talk to their children as often as possible about things that are happening in their everyday lives.

3. Invite parents to participate in a phonics, guided reading or guided writing session in school.

4. Encourage parents to involve children in household activities and emphasise the importance of naming the objects used in the task and talking about the task as they do it.

5. Parents could create simple recipe cards and instruction cards. Parents and children can read the cards together as they cook or do other things around the home or local area.

6. Ask parents to bring photographs of themselves reading to display in the school with appropriate captions.

7. Suggest to parents that children should have books, comics and writing materials in their bedrooms. Providing a bedside light for reading in bed will encourage children to read for pleasure.

8. Provide parents with a list of books from a range of authors. Regularly ‘spotlight’ a book in an area to which parents have access. Encourage parents and children to join the local library.

9. When sending books home which have parents’ notes in, encourage them to look at them.

10. For EAL children, if their parents don’t speak any English, it may be that you can draw on other family members – older brothers and sisters for example – to help the child with their reading. If there are older children in the school who speak the same language, you might set up a ‘buddy’ system where they can read a book together with the younger child.

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