

Some dos and don'ts

- Do read the words out loud together
- Don't go too fast – make your speed the same as your child's
- Do read every word – if your child gets it wrong say it right yourself again, then let your child say it right as well, then carry on
- Do make sure your child looks at the words. It can help if your child points to the word you are both reading with a finger
- Don't carry on reading if your child has signalled they want to go it alone
- Do praise your child for being confident enough to have a go.

You will keep switching between reading together and your child reading alone – this ensures you will be giving as much help as they need. Remember – you will read together more on hard books and less on easy books.

Successful Paired Reading

- Paired Reading sessions should be fun and relaxed.
- Child chooses the book.
- Not designed for the non-reader.
- A minimum of 100 sight words is best.
- Positive Feedback.
- Children learn by having a positive model.
- 1:1 attention.
- Increased reading practice.

What to read?

- Paired Reading can be just as effective when you read different texts like magazines, newspapers, non-fiction books and comics.
- From School, Home and Library.
- The child should choose the book.
- Too hard for the child to read alone.
- Not too hard for the helper.
- You can leave a book and choose again.

Time and Place

- Little and often
- 5 minutes a day
- 5 days a week
- Before reading: ensure that both you and the child are comfortable and sitting side by side so that you can read together
- Ideally a place with soft seating and scatter cushions.



Talking

- Show interest in the book
- Talk about the pictures
- Talk about the content/story
- Listen and give thinking time
- Discuss with the child to ensure child understands
- Praise is a key element of Paired Reading
- Adult enthusiasm is also essential in developing Paired Reading

The Five Finger Test

- Sometimes it is difficult to know if a book is going to be too easy or too hard by just looking at it.
- The Five Finger Test is one way to 'test' a book to see if it is right for you.
- Open the book in the middle and begin to read the page.
- Each time you come to a word that you don't know, hold one finger up.
- If you have all five fingers up before you get to the end of the page, the book may be too difficult for you.
- If you have no fingers up when you finish the page, the book may be too easy for you.

Positives of Paired Reading

- It is an opportunity for the child to practice reading skills without fear of getting it wrong.
- The child's confidence can also be boosted when you give them praise and one to one attention.
- Children are encouraged to pursue their own interests in reading materials. Supports motivation.
- Children are more in control. No failure – you will have read a word correctly within 5 seconds or less!
- Paired Reading is very flexible. The child decides how much support is required.
- Paired Reading gives continuity. It eliminates having to stop reading to break down or build up a word.

Bibliography

- Keith Topping (1995) Paired Reading, Spelling and Writing: The Handbook for Teachers and Parents. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Keith Topping (1997) Paired Reading: A powerful technique for parent use. Reading Together, 40, 608-614.