

Year 4

Supporting your child with English at home

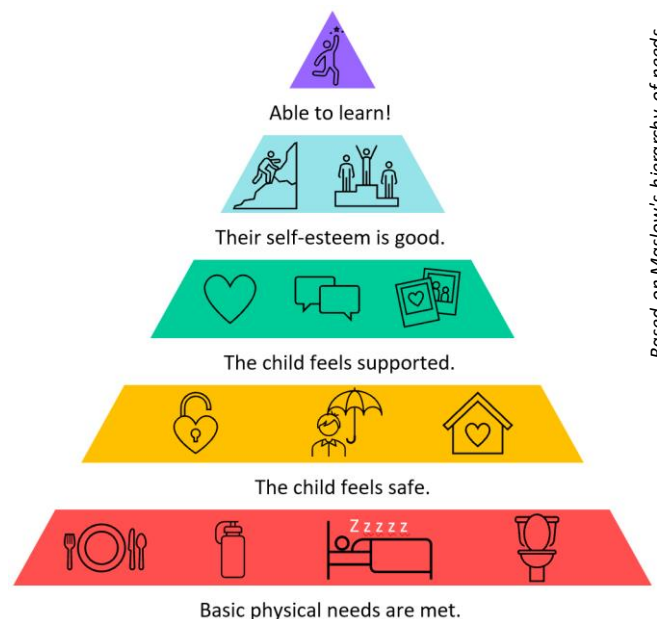


Home-learning can be challenging for both you and your child as everyone is adapting to this unusual situation. The following advice aims to offer helpful, practical tips with supporting your child's reading and writing while at home.



Preparing to learn: some top tips

- Ensure your child's **basic needs** have been met: Are they thirsty, for example?
- Make sure your child has a **clear space to work**. Think about the task they have to do – where might they be the most productive/ comfortable?
- Create a new **routine** that works around your family. If possible, involve your child in establishing routines that will enable them to manage the tasks set for them. Your routines should include **regular breaks**, ideally with fresh air.
- Tackle tasks in **short bursts** if your child is finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Where possible, allow your child **choices**. For example, if your child has been given two tasks for the day, give them the choice of which one to do first.
- **Model positive behaviours** to your child. Talk about the strategies you use to help you get through your daily tasks. If something isn't working, talk it through.
- Look for the positives: things won't always go according to plan. Try to focus on what is going well rather than what has gone wrong. Try to support your child with lots of **praise and encouragement**.
- Consider family **wellbeing**: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>
- Tips for anxiety: <https://www.childrens.com/health-wellness/8-tips-for-managing-childrens-anxiety-about-covid-19>



Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Giving just the right amount of support

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It's important that you try to encourage independence when working with your child.



You can do this by:

Self-scaffolding - This is where your child is working largely by themselves.

Prompting - You can give a prompt when your child needs just a little help to carry on working by themselves. For example, 'What do you need to do first?'; 'What's your plan?'; 'You can do this!'

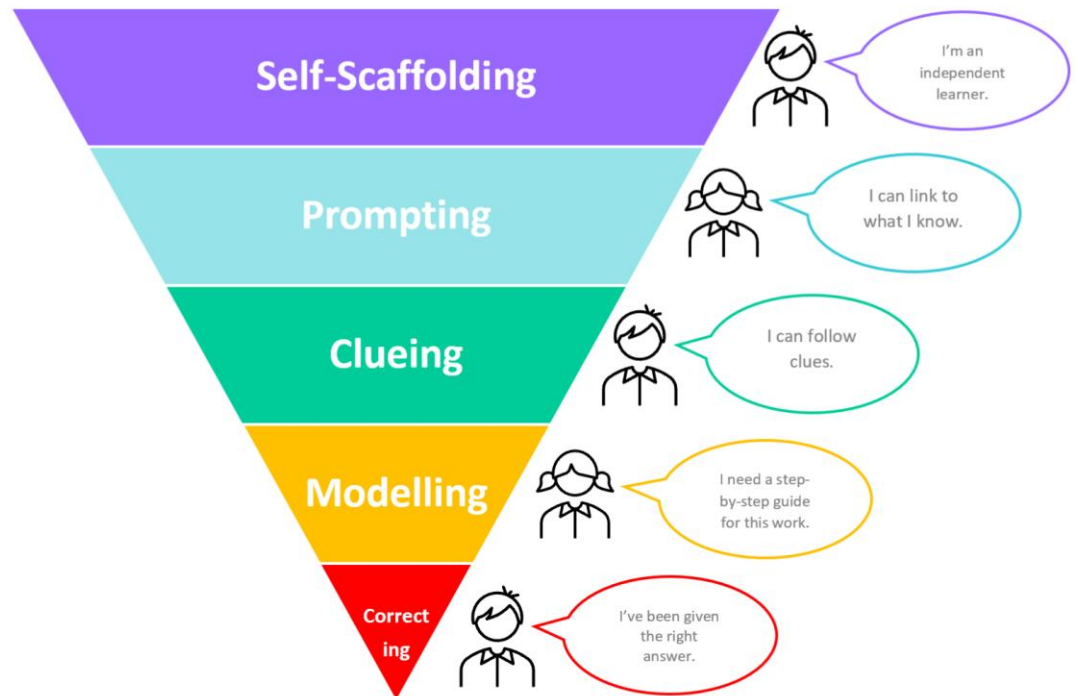
Clueing - Your child might need a hint about their work to keep them on track.

Always start with a small clue, then give a bigger clue if your child needs one. For example, 'What does a sentence always begin with?' or 'Let's go back and re-read this sentence again... I think you might have missed something out.'

Modelling - Sometimes it is really useful for you to model what to do while your child watches and listens. Your child should try the same step for themselves immediately afterwards.

Correcting - Only very occasionally, you may need to give your child answers.

Try to encourage your child to work independently as much as they can.



Adapted from: Bosanquet, P., Radford, J. and Webster, R. (2016)

Completing tasks

It's also important not to be too concerned about your child completing every single task. If your child has tried hard but has not been able to complete a task, let your child's teacher know. Your child's teacher recognises how challenging working at home can be for you and your child. Do what you can: Everybody's circumstances are different and we do understand that.



Take care of yourself too!

Looking after yourself will have an impact on how you support your child at home. Fresh air each day if possible, a few moments of quiet, enough water to drink and some exercise are all good places to start. Be kind to yourself!

(Adapted from the Book Trust Website)

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2020/june/how-to-help-your-children-return-to-school-5-top-tips/>



Illustration: Hannah Shaw

Why is reading so important?

There is a vast amount of research that shows us how important reading with our children is. It helps to improve your child's concentration and memory, develop their imagination, empathy, vocabulary and listening skills and takes them (and us!) to places we might never otherwise visit. It's also excellent for wellbeing.



The Importance of Reading Aloud to your Child

As your child's confidence grows in reading independently, it is still extremely beneficial for you to read aloud to them. In fact, research shows that reading aloud to your child will improve their reading and listening skills and academic performance and success.

How else does reading aloud to your child help?



Positive modelling: Your child will hear how the book should be read - with lots of expression and at just the right speed.



It improves comprehension: Your child will be able to focus on what's happening in the story or on the information in the text, rather than having to work hard to read it aloud themselves.



It sparks curiosity and a thirst for learning: Reading aloud to your child allows them to access a wider range of texts beyond what they can read by themselves. You could choose to read fiction, factual books and news articles, for example. It encourages life-long learning.



It is wonderful for bonding: It's a lovely opportunity for you to spend some dedicated time with your child, showing them how important they are and how important reading is.

Getting the Most Out of Reading with your Child



Watch this short video from The Open University to help you get the most out of reading with your child

Book Chat: Book Chat: Reading to your Child *The House that Once Was*: <https://youtu.be/zNqG-RIwrlM>



Listening to Your Child Read Aloud

- Try to **listen to your child read** aloud daily (5 - 10 minutes is long enough) or **chat with them about what they are reading**.
- Choose a quiet, undistracted time and get comfortable.
- Support your child by encouraging them with any books being sent home by school. Keep in close contact with school if you have any concerns or want to share successes.
- When your child tries to 'sound out' words, encourage the use of phonics letter sounds rather than 'alphabet names'. So for 'along' you'd say a-l-o-n-g, not A-L-O-N-G.

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<https://www.readliverpool.co.uk/>

You can borrow 8 virtual books at a time for free!

7 Top Tips to Support Reading at Home

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Shared reading is a great way to develop children's language and communication and to boost their reading skills. Regular reading routines can offer lots of opportunities for learning during school closures.

1 Concentrate on reading quality (it isn't all about reading lots!)



Don't worry too much about the 'what' and 'how' of reading each day. Books are great—but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable reading. Be on the lookout for reading, wherever it is!

2 Ask your child lots of questions



All reading matters. Shared reading is about 'reading with', not just 'reading to' (even for older children). So, ask lots of 'Wh' questions, such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? Try them when talking about books: for example, 'what do you think Harry is feeling?'

3 Ask your child to make predictions about what they have read



If it is a book, look at the front cover—or the last chapter—and talk about what might happen next. Look for clues in the book and be a reading detective! For example, 'can you see the bear on the front cover? Where do you think he will go?'

4 Ask your child to summarise what they have read



When you've finished reading, talk about what happened. Acting out the things that happened in the story or describing the big idea of a chapter is really fun and maximises learning. For example, 'can you remember all the things that happened on the bear hunt?'

5 Ask your child to write about what they have read



Write, or draw pictures, from anything you've read! Big writing and pictures are even more fun. For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues from the stories you've read together.

6 Read and discuss reading with friends or family



Make books a part of the family. Encourage your child to share them with a relative or friend, over a video call. Laugh about them when you are making meals together. For example, 'I hope the tiger doesn't come to tea today!'

7 Maintain the motivation to read



Talk about the joy of reading whenever you can. Your child is on an amazing journey to becoming a reader. Put them in the driving seat and have fun on the way! For example, 'choose your favourite story for bedtime tonight.'

Education Endowment Foundation (2018). *Preparing for Literacy: Improving Communication, Language and Literacy in the Early Years*. Education Endowment Foundation: London. Available online: eef.org.uk/literacy-early-years

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Questions to ask while reading with your child



It's important to ask questions when you are reading to your child and when your child is reading to you. You can ask questions before, during and after reading. Questions can help you to see whether your child has understood what you've read together. You can ask your child about:

Words

Find a word that means the same as...

Find a word which best describes the mood /character at this point in the story.

What does this word mean?

Finding information

What are the characters called?

Who is telling the story?

What word is used to describe the ...?

Summing it up

What's happened so far?

What do you think is the most important point in in this paragraph/page?

What is the main message in this story/poem/text? Why?

Using clues

How is the character feeling at this point in the story? How do you know?

Why do you think the character did that?

Can you explain why...?

How can you tell that...?

What the author means

What do you think the author meant by _____?

How does the author create this mood/atmosphere?

Why do you think the author used that word/phrase?

Predictions

What do you think might happen next?

If there was a sequel, what do you think might happen? Why?

What do you think would happen if...?

Making comparisons

How does the character's mood/attitude change from the beginning to the end of the story?

How is this character/plot similar/different to...?

Have you ever read another book similar to this?

How is it similar?

The Whole Text

Why do you think the writer has written/organised the text like this?

Who do you think this was written for? Why?