

Session 2: Getting the Setting Right, Ways to Share a Book, and the Importance of Praise

Preparation

1. Organise seating as before.
2. Ensure new books are available, and the 'old' ones returned / the record sheet of books previously borrowed.
3. Prepare a role play of 'Getting the Setting Right' (Appendix 8 uses 'I don't want to go to bed!' as an example).
4. Activity sheet: Getting the Setting Right (Appendix 9).
5. Words of equal length, one difficult, one easy (Appendix 10).
6. Prepare a role play that demonstrates the 'Importance of Praise' (Appendix 11 uses 'I don't want to go to bed!' as an example).
7. Selection of books for the children to choose with their parents.
8. Liaise with school representative with regard to when the children join their parents (and ensure that even when a parent is not able to join the session that their child still participates in book selection).
9. Provide copy of the session's script for the school representative.
10. Handout summarising some key points from sessions 1 and 2.
11. Tea/coffee.

READING TOGETHER 1ST STEPS - PARENT GROUPS**1. Introduction****1.1** Welcome everyone, including any ‘new faces’.

Consider having a ‘warm-up’ activity. For example, saying that you are all going to be at parents’ evenings and school events together for many years to come, and that apart from being parents of children in P1, you may have other things in common. Invite the parents to say a little about the things that they enjoy.

1.2 Recap on the last session: that it was a scene setting session:

- the relative influence of home and school
- reliving what it might have been like starting to learn to read
- choosing books: child central, with parent guidance
- vocabulary

1.3 Invite any comments about the content of last session, and about the books their child chose.**1.4** Detail the agenda for this session

- Getting the setting right
- Ways to share a book
- The importance of praise

2. Getting the setting right**2.1** *Activity:* Presenters to Role Play “Getting the Setting Right”.

Indicate that the purpose of the role play is to demonstrate inappropriate ways of reading to a child.

(Appendix 8 provides an exemplar: the adult’s interest is on something else; the sound is turned down, but not off. The replies to the child are cursory, and not thought out. The adult soon finds a way to bring the time together to an end).

Invite discussion about the role play.

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- 2.2** Young children find it very difficult to filter out distractions such as the television, radio, washing machine, other children, and to concentrate only on the book. We need to organise a special time and special place. Invite comments from the group
- 2.3** *Activity:* Invite participants to discuss with a partner/person next to them up to five conditions that help achieve them this, and identify up to five factors that sometimes work against them in their own situation. (Activity Sheet Appendix 9 can be used for this, if the presenters are confident that there are no literacy/handwriting issues for the parents present).
- 2.4** *Invite general discussion.* Highlight that there may not be as much time available as you might think initially. TV off, baby asleep, the dog had his walk. Optional: Presenter to record these on flip chart.
- 2.5** When reading sit close to your child, so he is relaxed and secure.
- 2.6** Reading Together is an active 2-way process:
- reading with your child
 - your child reading with you
 - looking at and talking about the book and its pictures
 - this is not about hearing your child read to you from another room!
- 3. Ways to Share a Book**
- 3.1** Research shows that most progress is made when we actively engage the child's attention when sharing a book. We can do this in a variety of ways.
- 3.2** Sometimes a story may lend itself to being read straight through, especially where rhyme and rhythm feature heavily.
- 3.3** At other times we can stop at a page which your child finds interesting and discuss it. Rather than getting in the way of the story; this can add depth and interest to the story.
- 3.4** Chat about the story.
- 3.5** Sometimes it is appropriate to explain punctuation, such as the use of speech marks, apostrophes, question marks.

- 3.6** Bring the books alive, by being expressive, and giving the characters different voices.
- 3.7** As your child gets under way with reading, you may decide to point to the word as you go along, or your child may point out words he recognises from school book.

Invite discussion about how the parents shared the book that their child chose last week

- 3.8** Sharing books is a way to build on your child's vocabulary. Good vocabulary knowledge is necessary in order to be a fluent reader. When a child starts reading they look for clues as to what a new word might be.

- They look in the picture for clues
- They use the context of the sentence for clues
- They use the first letter of a word as a clue.

That's why you will often hear a child read 'house' for 'home'. With these three clues, they can sometimes work out the new word. If the word is not part of their vocabulary, it will be very hard for the child to read it. Invite parents to think back to the Arabic writing shared with them in session 1

Give example: a word such as 'catastrophe' (older readers!).

- 3.9** *Activity:* Also demonstrate using the pairs of words of the same length – one common, one unusual (Appendix 10): show the cards for just a couple of seconds. Ask if they were able to read any of the words. Most will have been able to read the first word, very few, if any, the second and unknown word.
- 3.10** Change the book if you have read through it, or if he is bored with it. On the other hand he might want to read through it again and take a greater part, joining in – there are no hard and fast rules.
- 3.11** You could talk about the story before and after reading together; ask questions like: "What do you think will happen next?" or "What would you do if you were in the story?" Praise the suggestions "you may be right," "I wonder," "what a good idea". Open ended questions have unlimited answers and therefore ideal opportunities for praise.

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3.12 Don't stop reading to your child at other times like bedtime. Being read to is very valuable, and many a child puts the light back on after you have left them, to look at the book again, and possibly read some of it some more themselves.

4. The importance of praise and keeping it fun

- 4.1** As a parent, the way you respond to your children when sharing a book together is very important, and will affect their confidence.
- 4.2** Children respond to their feelings. If they feel good about sharing in a story, they will want to do it again. This good feeling will encourage them later as they move into independent reading.
- 4.3** We have talked already about finding the right time and place. We also need to generate the right atmosphere. Make it a happy time and be positive. Look for opportunities to give praise, eg "clever boy", or "that was really smart to notice that", or "you remembered, good girl".
- 4.4** Don't tell him off for making a mistake: "wrong again" → tears?, the book thrown away, the adult angry and frustrated...what will tomorrow's session be like?
- 4.5** *Activity:* Presenters to role play "The Importance of Praise". (Appendix 11 provides an example). Parent and child sitting close together; atmosphere warm and relaxed, child in charge as much as possible, eg child choosing a book, turning pages etc. Parent praising child regularly. Encourage comments from the group. Highlight that in the space of less than 5 minutes there were at least five positive statements made to the child, and no negative ones. This can only foster a positive relationship between the adult and child.
- 4.6** Staff member to fetch the children to join their parents. Invite discussion about the book they had. What did the children like/not like about the book that they had chosen. Return last week's book,
- 4.7** Provide handout of key points of session.
- 5.** Tea/coffee, and informal discussion.