

# Paired Reading

See [Highland Literacy Paired Reading](#)

See [National Literacy Trust Paired Reading](#)

## What is Paired Reading?

Paired Reading was initially devised by Professor Keith Topping of Dundee University.

Paired reading is a very effective, evidence-based method of helping children progress in their reading. It is like a child learning to ride a bike. In the early stages you give the child encouragement, confidence and control, by holding the bicycle. Your own instinct will tell you when to let go. So you can gradually disengage for longer periods until your child is able to ride without help. The same applies to Paired Reading. It is an ideal way of helping your child to become an independent reader. It works on building up the positives and successes rather than concentrating on mistakes.

It helps to:

- ✓ Develop a child's love for reading and books
- ✓ Encourage a child to read independently with confidence
- ✓ Build up trust between the reader and reading partner

## Who is Paired Reading for?

Paired Reading works best for children who have already made a start with reading. For those in the first stages of developing literacy. It is also very effective with older struggling or reluctant readers. Every child will benefit from using Paired Reading. It is not just for children with learning difficulties.

## Who is involved?

Paired reading can be carried out using a number of different partnerships.

- ✓ Teacher and pupil
- ✓ Parent and child
- ✓ More advanced peer and skill developing child (There should be at least a two year reading age gap between partners)

## What are the benefits?

Teachers often notice a marked difference in a child's reading fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.

Parents who have undertaken Paired Reading report that not only does the child's reading improve but that child's self-esteem has improved, and generally the child is more co-operative at home also. This can be attributed to the quality parent - child relationship that develops as they spend more time together.

Children who have taken part in paired reading sessions comment on their developing enjoyment of reading and no longer dreading reading lessons.

## What reading materials should we use?

Any type of text could be used from story books and comics to recipes and leaflets. The child should choose the text. The chosen text should have around four new words to a page – enough to enable progress but not so many to make the child feel overwhelmed.

## How often should Paired Reading be carried out?

As often as possible but at least three times a week for 15 to 20 minutes. The time can be adjusted according to the child's needs and abilities.

## How does a Paired Reading session work?

- ✓ Make sure you are comfortable. Turn off the television and minimise distractions.
- ✓ Let the child choose the book to read.
- ✓ Together look at the outside of the book: the picture, the title, and the author. Talk about what these might be telling us about the book.
- ✓ Take a 'picture walk' through the book, talking about the things you see, what might happen on the next page, ask open questions and acknowledge and praise answers. Give any thinking time that is necessary.
- ✓ The learner should be in control of the book: turning the pages, pointing to the words, setting the pace.
- ✓ For some children, you will need to read the story first. Have the child point to the picture and you read only when he/she has pointed to the next word.
- ✓ For most, begin by reading together. The child is in charge of pace by moving his/her finger along the text, so you may have to read slower than you would like to begin with. If the child wishes to read alone, they tap the book (or other agreed symbol) and you stop reading.
- ✓ Then it is his/her turn to read if he/she wishes to. It may take several readings together over subsequent days to build a child's confidence up sufficiently to read aloud alone. Again he/she should point to the words as he/she reads. The child's voice should dominate the sessions.
- ✓ Make audible sounds of affirmation regularly (changing words you use and sounds you make) especially at any difficult words which were read correctly or when the child has self-corrected mistakes.
- ✓ If the child gets stuck, allow about 4 to 5 seconds for him/her to work it out.
- ✓ If the child can't work it out in that time, they probably won't be able to. Don't make a fuss or show displeasure but tell them the word and show how you know what it says using techniques such as sounding it out and breaking it up. Sometimes you need to tell them that it is a silly word and they just have to learn it. Write the word down and practice it later, maybe looking for it again on another page. Remember this is to be a time of positives and not negatives. Praise the child for listening. Say I can tell you are concentrating on this difficult word because you are looking at the word, you are listening to me, your hands and feet are still.
- ✓ After a mistake, resume reading with the child until he signals once more for you to be quiet.
- ✓ Pause in the reading every now and again to talk about what has been read, anything funny that has happened, how it could relate to the child's own experience, or to ask questions.

Remember Praise, discuss and question throughout.

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*Intervene as much as necessary and as little as possible.*

And

Praise! Praise! Praise!

## Paired Reading Partners

- ☺ Help to choose the right book.
- ☺ Talk about the outside of the book.
- ☺ 'Walk' through the inside of the book.
- ☺ Let the reader take control of pace of reading.
- ☺ Read together until Reader taps the page to show that you should stop.
- ☺ If reader makes a mistake, give him/her a chance to work it out. If he/she can't, then say the word and show how you know what it is. (write it in a jotter)
- ☺ Remember to praise often.
- ☺ Talk about what is being read.
- ☺ Have fun!

# How do I know what the word says?

Break it down into syllable chunks.  
yes/ter/day

Look at the pictures. Do they give me an idea what this might be about?



Pete held tightly to  
the parachute,

Skip over the word and read the rest of the sentence. What word can you think of that begins with its first letter that would make sense?

Stretch out the word.

o-c-t-o-p-u-s