

Tips for reading with children

Children should be encouraged to use their phonics skills when reading decodable books. You may wish to give these tips to parents and other adult helpers who will be listening to children read.

- ▶ Before children begin to read a decodable book, use one or two words, perhaps from the title of the book, to recap how to ‘say the sounds’ and ‘blend the word’ (for example, *In the n-e-t net. In the net*).
- ▶ Use prompts that your child will be familiar with from the phonics teaching sessions. If your child pauses at a word, remind them to ‘sound-talk the word’ or to ‘say the sounds’ and then ‘blend them together’.
- ▶ Always prompt children to use their phonic knowledge and skills to decode words. Don’t ask them to look for a clue in the picture, guess the word, or rely on memory.
- ▶ Children might recognise some words automatically without sound-talking and blending them. This is a good thing, as it is a sign of reading fluency. They do not need to go back and sound-talk these words.
- ▶ If your child is struggling with a word, help to sound-talk it. For example, point to the letters, say the sounds and see if your child can then blend and say the word. If they say the correct sounds but too slowly to blend them, repeat the sounds more quickly so it is easier for them to blend the word.
- ▶ After children have sound-talked and read a word, encourage them to go back and read the complete sentence. This encourages children to check that the word makes sense and helps to develop their understanding of the text.
- ▶ When children finish reading a page, discuss the picture and talk about what is happening. This helps to check their understanding of the text.
- ▶ Some of the words in the **My Letters and Sounds Phonics Readers** are coloured blue. These are ‘tricky words’ – they have a letter or letters that make an unexpected sound. If your child pauses at a tricky word, you should still ask them to sound-talk the word, but remind them to look for the tricky letter that makes an unusual sound (for example, the ‘o’ in ‘go’).
- ▶ In some words in the **My Letters and Sounds Phonics Readers**, two or three letters are underlined. This is to remind children that those letters go together to make one sound. If children say the individual letter sounds, remind them that the ‘two (or three) letters make one sound’. Ask them to say the sounds again and blend them together (for example, *g-oo-t goat*).