

Engaging parents and carers

To help pupils develop their reading ability, it is important that they get as many opportunities to practise reading as possible. You can encourage pupils to utilise their time outside of school to develop their reading further. One way to do this is to engage parents, carers or families in their child's reading development, which may increase the amount of time a pupil spends engaging with texts at home.

Listen to Kelly Challis discuss shared reading. Consider the following questions using the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook):

- Why is it important for parents/carers to read with their children?
- How can you support parent/carers to read with their children?



Direct Link: [Shared reading - Kelly Challis, Driver Youth Trust](#)

Transcript: [Shared reading - Kelly Challis, Driver Youth Trust](#)

[\(this link opens in a new window/tab\)](#)

Sharing reading strategies with parents

You should encourage all parents/carers to support their child to read and can do this by sharing key strategies with them. The support parents/carers provide, and therefore the strategies you suggest, are likely to differ based on a their confidence in reading and the languages that they speak. As Kelly mentioned, one strategy they can use is 'shared reading', where an expert reader (in this case the parent/carer) models good reading techniques and asks a variety of question types to monitor and enhance understanding. However, those who lack confidence in reading may not feel they have the skill level to model good reading practices to their children. In such instances, parents/carers can support their child's reading development by listening to them read and asking them prompt questions. It might be helpful to provide examples of question prompts that they could ask. This would help all parents/carers, but especially those who are less confident at reading.

Supporting pupils with EAL

Parents/carers of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) should, where possible, also be encouraged to read to their children in their native language as this has many benefits as outlined by the [National Literacy Strategy](#) (Bourne, 2000). For parents/carers who are less confident in speaking and reading in English, it provides them with a way of developing their child's reading ability. It also demonstrates to both the pupil and their family that their home languages are valued, which can have a positive effect on identify and self-esteem. This positive effect can in turn impact on motivation and subsequently, learning. Perhaps most importantly, pupils progress better if their home language continues to be developed while they begin to learn English because the skills of reading in one language (for example, using phonemes to decode words) can transfer to another. Sending pupils home with dual language books (written in English and their home language) is an effective way to support and encourage parents or carers to continue to develop their child's proficiency in their home language.

Promoting reading for pleasure

It is important that you promote reading for pleasure to both your pupils and their parents/carers. By informing parents/carers of a variety of ways they can support their child's reading development, you will help to promote reading for pleasure as they can choose strategies that they feel most comfortable using, which is likely to make the process less stressful and more enjoyable for both parents/carers and pupils. In the classroom, you can promote reading for

pleasure by reading a range of high-quality texts to pupils.

Building relationships

Another benefit to engaging parents and carers in their child's reading development is that it creates an opportunity for you to build effective relationships with them. This can improve a pupil's motivation, behaviour and academic success.

One way to do this is by sharing children's reading successes with their parents/carers. For example, if you have been working with a parent/carer to improve their child's reading, or if reading is their child's area of development, you could seek an opportunity to speak to parents/carers or send home a message in a journal to inform them of their child's achievements. The message could say something like "Zack tried really hard to sound out the words 'elements' and 'atomic' in his science lesson today. He is working hard and making good progress in his reading."



Over to you!

It's time to reflect on your own practice. Consider the following questions and record your responses in the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook):

- How do you currently engage parents in their child's learning?
- What more could you do?

It's important that parents/carers are engaged in their child's learning throughout their education. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to discuss your reflections with your mentor in your next mentor meeting. They will be able to support you to effectively engage with parents through processes that align with your school's policy.