

# Paired Reading

A guide from the Southwark Educational Psychology Service

Paired reading is a very effective, evidence-based method of helping children progress in their reading

## What are the benefits of Paired Reading?

Paired reading is beneficial for children in the early stages of reading, or who are more developed in reading but may be struggling or reluctant to read. 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

### Step 1 Choose a book

- Allow the child to choose something to read.
- This could be anything (books, magazines, comics, websites) but should be age and ability appropriate

### Step 2 Talk about the book

- Together look at the outside of the book (the picture, title, author etc.)
- Talk about what these might be telling us about the book

### Step 3 Take a picture walk

- Go through the book, looking at the pictures
- Talk about the things you see, what might happen on the next page etc.
- Ask open questions and acknowledge and praise answers.

### Step 4 Read together

- Allow the child to be in control of the pace, controlled by moving their finger along the text. Read together at the same time.
- For some children, it may be appropriate to read the story first without pressuring them to join in.

### Step 5 Child reads alone

- When the child is ready to read alone, they can use an agreed signal (e.g. tapping the book). Stop reading and allow them to continue
- If the child makes a mistake, allow 4-5 seconds to correct. If not corrected, say the word and encourage them to repeat it.





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## The fundamental principles

### Talk

Talk about the book throughout the process.

Ask questions about the pictures, what has happened, what they think might happen, how the characters feel etc

### Praise

Praise often, using a variety of different words, and sounds.

Praise attempts to read hard words, and attempts to self-correct, even if they get it wrong!

### Fun

Paired reading should be a fun and enjoyable process for the both of you, and should build your bond as well as foster an enjoyment of books.

If the child is a highly reluctant reader who does not have a positive experience of reading, it may be appropriate to read for them for as long as is needed until they feel comfortable. Make sure they still set the pace by moving their finger along the text as you read.

### Support

If the child gets stuck, give them 4-5 seconds to self-correct.

If they can't self-correct, or if they read a word wrong, tell them the word without making them 'break it up' or 'sound it out' – it's important not to make a fuss about mistakes

