



A Guide to Book Chat



Research indicates that parents who regularly read with their children at home lay solid foundations for language and literacy development. It's a precious time for you both to relax, share your thoughts and feelings, have fun and chat together. Whilst sharing books, your child has your undivided attention and the conversation, connection and enjoyment they experience is invaluable.

To promote children's reading enjoyment and foster the habit, we need to read **to** children and **with** them and to **talk** about reading together. These conversations are crucial as they help readers to engage and think deeply.

There are several ways to prompt book chat. These are our Top Tips.

Watch and listen carefully to follow their interests

Observe and respond: Pay attention to what captures your child's attention and build on their interests, for example, *'Oh, you've spotted the...!'*.

Invite your child to get involved

Leave pauses: Encourage them to look closely and think. This will lead to comments on the pictures or questions. Follow their lead and let the book chat flow.

Wonder and connect to your lives

Pose questions: Encourage thinking and discussion with open questions such as, *'How do you think the boy is feeling?'*. Try to avoid closed questions such as, *'What colour is that?'* as these prompts have a single answer and don't keep the conversation going.

Share your emotional responses!

Draw attention to illustrations: Encourage your child to notice details in the pictures and think what they might mean. For example, *'Look! What's that hiding? What do you think it might be?'*.

Keep it light and enjoyable!

Ponder and wonder: Encourage your child to think about what might happen using phrases such as, *'I wonder if/whether/who/why/what...'*.

Make personal connections: Picture storybooks not only allow children to empathise with the experiences of fictional characters but enable them to make sense of events in their own lives. Talk about your own connections. For example, *'That reminds me of when...'*.

Comment on your feelings: By sharing your emotional response to a character or something that's happened you encourage your child to do the same - helping them engage and learn to express their emotions.

Your combined pleasure counts: Bring the story to life with facial expressions, actions and sounds and encourage your child to join in! Do offer information to help with unfamiliar words, such as *'That's the hencoop, it's where the hens live'* - but keep the focus on fun.

Book chat develops language, comprehension and enjoyment.