

Supporting your Child's Primary Education



English

*A Parent - Teacher
Support Booklet*



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In O'Growney National School, we strive to do our very best to ensure that every pupil in our school reaches his/her full potential in a safe, inclusive and happy learning environment. We believe that the school is not an isolated unit but a union between home, school and community all working towards the same goal of ensuring each child thrives in life. We acknowledge the vital role parents play in their child's education from infants through to college.

This booklet focuses on English. The skills of being able to read and write are an essential part of everyday life including school, work, family and social life. Being able to read and write opens further gateways to learning other skills and talents.

We acknowledge that not every child learns at the same rate and some children find it challenging to grasp the concepts of reading and writing. These children need a helping hand in achieving their reading and writing goals.

As parents play such an essential and invaluable role in their child's education we hope the following hints and guidelines will help you support your child's reading and writing progress. We acknowledge that due to time constraints it would be impossible to adopt every aspect of this handbook but we hope you will find some useful tips to help your child achieve his/her goals.

Thanks for taking the time to read this booklet. If you have any further concerns or queries please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher. Together as a team we aspire to help your child reach his/her reading and writing target. They are vital skills children need to master.

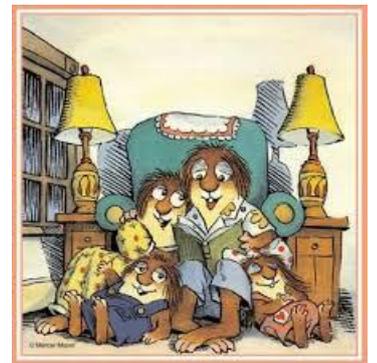
Míle Buíochas,

Staff of O'Growney National School.



Practical Ways You Can Help Develop Your Child's Reading

- ❖ **Let your child see you reading.** Have magazines, newspapers, leaflets and books in your home.
- ❖ **Share what you are reading.** Talk about what you are reading and why. Encourage your child to do the same.
- ❖ **Reading Games.** Help your child find appropriate word and reading games on the computer.
- ❖ **Reading Time.** Set aside a time and place for your child to read such as a comfy chair in a quiet area.
- ❖ **Ask Questions.** Ask your child questions about what he or she is reading, such as, 'What is the story about?', 'Who are the important characters in the story?', 'Where does the story take place?', 'Why do you think that character made that choice?', 'Why did that happen?', 'How did you know about ___?' and 'Would you recommend this book to your friends?'
- ❖ **Comic Strip.** Ask your child to draw a comic strip about what happens in the story.
- ❖ **Help Out.** Ask your child to help out with reading and following a recipe or writing a card or letter.
- ❖ **Dictionary.** Keep a dictionary on hand. Help your child look up new words they read or hear.
- ❖ **Print Rich Environment.** Encourage your child to label his/her toy boxes, leave notes and reminders on the calendar and read information on packaging.
- ❖ **High Interest.** Read mysteries with your child and try to figure out the clues together.
- ❖ **Before the Film.** Read the book together first before you take a trip to the cinema. Talk about which you each liked better.
- ❖ **Library.** Look for and read together the books that were your favourites when you were a kid.
- ❖ **Get Writing.** Encourage your child to write letters, thank you notes, e-mails, lists, stories, diary entries, reviews and reminders.
- ❖ **Puzzles.** Have a go at word searches, crosswords and other word games or puzzles.
- ❖ **Family.** Ask other members of your family to help out such as grandparents, older cousins, aunties and uncles.





Why Reading Matters

Reading Takes You Places

Reading is an important skill that children need to learn and develop. It is an essential part of school and later on college life. It is an essential part of our everyday adult life. The more access to high interest, enjoyable reading sources the more likely a child is to stick with reading and develop the reading skills they will need to fully access information in their adult lives. Inspiring children to read is an amazing, worthwhile accomplishment.

- ❖ **Reading opens new worlds and enriches children's lives.** Reading opens doors to factual information about any subject. If children can read well they have access to the wealth of information in schools, libraries, the internet and bookstores. Through books and stories children can learn about people and places in other parts of the world. Through stories and novels children have access to new experiences and ideas.
- ❖ **Reading Broadens Vocabulary.** Reading exposes kids to new vocabulary. Books help children to develop basic language skills.
- ❖ **Books are interactive; they demand that children think.** Fiction and non-fiction books widen our horizons and give us new ideas and new ways to think. Books help to develop critical thinking skills.
- ❖ **Books develop and nourish a child's imagination.**
- ❖ **Books help us to understand ourselves, to find out who we are.** Books help to develop our self-confidence.
- ❖ **Books provide us with different perspectives.** Books provide us with multiple perspectives and show us there is more than one way to view the world.
- ❖ **Books help children develop their own morals.** Books help us to reflect on right and wrong.
- ❖ **Books answer and create questions.**
- ❖ **Reading can provide children with opportunities for good, clean fun.** Reading provides children with the opportunity for endless hours of fun and entertainment. It is a great way of banishing boredom on a rainy day. Books offer an escape from the stress of everyday life.
- ❖ **Reading can enhance children's social skills.** Reading aloud with your child is a great opportunity to spend some quiet, relaxed, quality time with your child. Heading to the library as a family and sharing information about the books you have read provides the chance to spend some time together as a family. At school books bring children together and can be part of a positive shared experience. During group reading sessions children learn how to behave around other children and how to sit quietly for a group activity.
- ❖ **Books inspire us to dream and give us the tools to achieve our dreams.**



Supporting Your Child's Primary Education

Please find below some practical suggestions which we hope will provide you with opportunities to support your child's education. **It is of vital importance that you show an interest in your child's homework each evening.** Please give your child a few minutes of your time to praise their efforts, listen to them read or ask them some spellings. Please encourage your child to seek help if they are finding it difficult to grasp a concept both at home and in school.



❖ Reading

Learning to read is a gradual process. Reading is something to be enjoyed and should never be viewed as a chore.

How You Can Help ...

- Fill your child's life with a print rich environment.
- Encourage your child to read at home from a wide variety of sources (books, recipes, poems, magazines etc.).
- Have D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) time before bedtime each evening. Encourage your child to talk about what they have read.
- As a family join the local library. The library is a fantastic resource on your doorstep. Explore the fiction and non-fiction books with your child and fuel their imagination, curiosity and creativity.
- Read to your child a variety of stories and as your child's reading confidence develops listen to him/her read. Chat about the stories with your child.
- Model the reading process to your child.
- Encourage him/her to use knowledge of letter-sound relationships, grammar and syntax and surrounding text when attempting to identify unfamiliar words.
- Encourage your child to share their favourite books with their friends.





❖ Writing

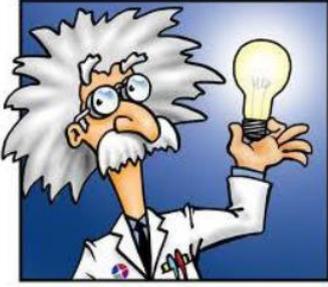
As with learning to read, learning to write is a gradual process. Writing comes in many styles from functional such as lists, letters, notes and completing forms to creative such as poetry and stories.

You Can Help ...

- *Get your child involved in practical writing tasks such as writing lists, thank you notes, letters, e-mails, diary entries, messages and notes.*
- *Read your child's written work and offer practical suggestions. Remain positive – encourage, praise and support your child's attempts at writing. Encourage your child to revise, edit and improve his/her writing.*
- *Model writing for your child. Demonstrate editing your writing.*
- *Encourage your child to write to their grandparents, friends, cousins such as writing a postcard or inviting a friend over for dinner. Help your child to see the benefits of being able to write.*
- *Display your child's "best written work".*
- *Encourage your child to reflect on their own written work. Ask them to point out their favourite part and then to point out a part they would like to change. Help them to edit their work.*
- *Use the two stars and a wish strategy to improve your child's writing. Point out two things you want to give stars to and then a part you wish they could work on for the next time.*



Comprehension Strategies



Comprehension strategies can be defined as the “mental processes” that good readers use to understand text. Comprehension of a text occurs through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text. Below are some comprehension strategies that will help your child construct meaning from the text he/she is reading.

❖ **Creating Images** ~ Encourage your child to create images using all their senses to help them draw conclusions, make predictions, interpret information, remember details and assist with overall comprehension. Help your child locate words that describe what it looks like, feels like and sounds like. Why not ask them to draw the setting. Encourage your child to reflect on their predictions.

❖ **Self-Questioning** ~ Encourage your child to constantly think of questions before, during and after reading to help him/her understand the text. This creates a framework of active reading and engagement as he/she searches for answers. Discuss the text with your child and encourage him/her to ask “I wonder” questions. Use a KWL chart with your child. Before reading write down what you know (K), and what you would like to find out (W). Afterwards fill in what you have learned (L). Use stop and think cards for example Do I understand that section? Could I explain it to someone else?



❖ **Skimming** ~ This involves quickly glancing through a text to gain a general impression of the text. Encourage your child to use the pictures and titles as useful clues.

❖ **Scanning** ~ This involves glancing through material to locate specific information. Encourage your child to practice this by locating interesting words, a part in the text or by asking your child quiz questions.

❖ **Predicting** ~ Prediction helps readers activate their prior knowledge about a topic. Chat about the title, images, cover page, author and plot before you begin reading.



❖ **Connecting** ~ This helps your child to make strong connections between prior knowledge and the new information they have learned from the text. Why not try using post it notes to help your child mark places in the text where they have made a personal connection with own experience, a previous text or similar characters. Creating KWL charts and character profiles with your child are other great ways of helping your child to make connections.

❖ **Comparing** ~ Encourage your child to compare texts identifying similarities and differences.

❖ **Inferring** ~ This encourages your child to make assumptions about what is not explicitly stated in the text. Chat with your child about predictions, conclusions and interpretations. Why not encourage your child to role-play a character or create a Report Card for a character. Encourage your child to chat about each characters point of view. Ask your child to finish these sentences I think that ..., Maybe, It could mean that ... and Perhaps



❖ **Synthesising** ~ This strategy is where a reader brings together information that may come from a variety of sources. Encourage your child to identify “AH! HA!” moments when they are reading. Try sequencing the events in the story or starting a debate based on the text.

❖ **Determining Importance** ~ This encourages readers to constantly ask themselves what is important. Try encouraging your child to identify the five key moments in the text or create a main idea pyramid with the most important facts at the top. Why not ask your child to highlight or underline the key words or phrases.

❖ **Summarizing and Paraphrasing** ~ Summarizing is the ability to reduce a larger text so the focus is on the key elements. Paraphrasing is the re-stating or re-writing of text into other words. Both summarizing and paraphrasing involves using the key words and phrases to capture the main focus of the text. Try encouraging your child to create a newspaper report, a 66 word challenge summary or a review based on the text. Ask your child to finish these sentence starters I think the purpose of this text was to ... or I think these were the most important parts....





Decoding Spellings

Learning spellings provides children with the tools they need to write more and bring new vocabulary into their writing. Most spellings can be learned using phonics but there are spellings that have to be learned off by heart. These are called tricky words as they are harder to spell. Here are some practical tips to help get your child spelling.

- ❖ **Use the Predict, Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check strategies for learning spellings.**
- ❖ **Have your child write spelling words.** Encourage your child to write his/her spellings on paper with pencils, pens, markers or paint. Why not try writing them with chalk outside on the ground or typing them on the computer. He/she could try air tracing them, writing them with their finger on the table or tracing the word in sand. Practice makes perfect!
- ❖ **Break It Up.** Encourage your child to examine the word carefully. Is there a small word hidden in the word that will help spell it.
- ❖ **Patterns.** Look out for word patterns and point them out to your child for example would and could have the same ending.
- ❖ **Sound It Out.** Encourage your child to use his/her knowledge of phonics to help spell a word.
- ❖ **Out Loud.** Have your child spell the words out loud while you are in the car, out for a walk or in a queue at the shop.
- ❖ **Spell words using scrabble tiles or flashcards.** Why not make your own flashcards with index cards. Consider using a different colour for the vowels.
- ❖ **Focus.** If the list of words to learn is long, have your child focus on a manageable amount at a time.
- ❖ **Try writing the words in alphabetical order or in order from longest to shortest.**
- ❖ **Hangman.** Play Hangman with your child using the spelling words. Why not try making crosswords, word searches and puzzles with the spelling words for your child to solve. Check out the internet for useful programmes to help with this.
- ❖ **Combine spelling with physical activity.** Have your child do Jumping Jacks, saying one letter per jump or while walking up and down the stairs saying one letter per step.
- ❖ **Keep a dictionary at home and help your child look up unfamiliar words.**
- ❖ **Encourage your child to read and experience new vocabulary.**
- ❖ **Try to bring an element of fun into learning spellings.**



Tackling New Words



Teaching children some reading strategies for tackling new words is a great way to boost their reading confidence. Here are some of those reading strategies.

- ❖ Use pictures to help look for clues.
- ❖ Sound out and blend the phonemes. (c – ar – p – e – t ... car – pet ... carpet)
- ❖ Look for smaller words hidden inside bigger words. (**teacher**)
- ❖ Cut up words into syllables. (thun-der-ing)
- ❖ Use punctuation to help make sense of what they are reading. (!,?)
- ❖ Encourage your child to re-read a word or sentence if they don't understand.
- ❖ Read on to see if they can make sense of the word they don't know.
- ❖ Encourage your child to listen to the words as they read them to see if they make sense.
- ❖ Explore words to see if they look similar to one they already know. (would, could, should)
- ❖ Encourage your child to imagine what is happening and create a picture in their head.
- ❖ Encourage your child to ask questions to help them if they don't understand.
- ❖ Praise your child for knowing he/she has made a mistake and going back to fix it.



Phonics

Phonics provides children with the ability to decode new vocabulary and attempt new words on their own. Here are some phonics rules your child should know. Ask your class teacher for help if you are unsure of any sound.

- ❖ O'Growney N.S. uses the Jolly Phonics programme to teaching phonics. Ensure your child knows all the letter sounds. Children are thought that letters have a name and a sound for example the letter e's name is eeee and sound is eh (as in egg).
- ❖ **Magic e.** Magic e comes at the end of a word and it makes the other vowel say its name. (can ~ cane; kit ~ kite; hop ~ hope; fin ~ fine; tap ~ tape)
- ❖ **When two vowels go walking the first one does the talking.** When two vowels are together in a word the first vowel sound only is used and it says its name. (mean, ear, leaf, rain)



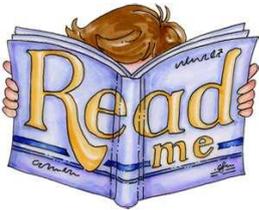


Plurals



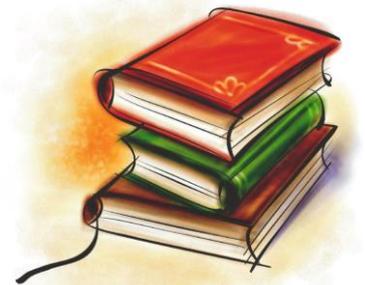
Teaching children the rules for making words plural will help with their spelling of plural words.

- ❖ Sometimes we add *s* to make words plural. (cats, dogs, pens)
- ❖ If a word ends in *s*, *x*, *sh* or *ch* we add *es* to make more than one. (foxes, matches, dishes, boxes)
- ❖ If a word ends in *y* the *y* changes to *i* before adding *es*. (copies, babies, flies, puppies, stories)
- ❖ If a word ends in *f* or *fe* it change to *ves* to mean more than one. (lives, wolves, knives, elves)
- ❖ Unfortunately some words don't follow a rule and children have to learn these. (children)



A Good Reader

- ❖ A good reader has a purpose for reading. Give your child a question to answer from their reading.
- ❖ A good reader thinks about what they already know. Ask your child about the title and the summary before he/she starts reading.
- ❖ A good reader makes sure they understand what they read. Ask your child questions about what they have read or get them to summarise.
- ❖ A good reader looks at the pictures when possible.
- ❖ A good reader predicts what will happen next.
- ❖ A good reader forms pictures in their mind.
- ❖ A good reader draws conclusions about what they have read.
- ❖ A good reader tries to figure out new words. Praise every attempt.
- ❖ A good reader keeps on practicing.



Thanks for taking the time to read this booklet. Remember it is not possible to adopt everything but we hope there are a few ideas that can be adopted and will be suited to your family. We hope you have found our tips and strategies helpful. Happy reading!

