

Dear Parents,

I sincerely hope you and your family are well. These are no doubt exceptional and unprecedented times for us all. We all have family members and yourselves too that need our care and attention. Mind yourselves as you navigate your way through home learning/schooling. Maybe take advantage of this time to do things with your child/children that you have always wanted to do, but never had the opportunity. There are lots of life skills for children to learn at home through cooking, baking, cleaning, tidy up, physical exercise, play, chat and quiet time!!!

RTE 2 television begins "Home School Hub" on Monday March 30<sup>th</sup>. It could occupy younger children for a few hours.

It's important to mind our own wellbeing at this time too. Why not take some time to go for a walk (within 2km of home), read a book, prepare a nice meal (with help from children) or get older siblings to cook instead, practise some yoga and mindful breathing, watch a movie that makes you laugh out loud.

We're all in this together.....Ní neart go cur le chéile.... And we need to look out for each other. Above all, be safe. Stay at home and follow all the guidelines to help prevent the spread of covid19.

Well done on doing your best---Keep doing it.

Best of luck,

Máiréad Guckian.

Enclosed are a few tips for reading with your child/children, Junior Infants to Second class.

Junior and Senior Infant pupils have started their reading journey and are able to read at their own level quite independently.

First and Second class pupils have developed a little more fluency and competence and can read on their own at a higher level at this stage.

It is important to keep in mind when reading that your child is reading at a "just right" level. There needs to be a little challenge for them too!!!. If the level is too difficult, your child will lose interest and become disheartened. If the level is too easy, then there is no challenge. Ideally your child should be reading at 95% success rate. A very simple guide to choosing the correct level is to use the "five finger rule". Ask your child to read a passage/paragraph of 50 words (Junior and Senior Infant) or 100 words (First and Second class) from a suitable book. If your child makes 5 errors, one for each finger, then that book is too difficult. Keep trying until you get the right level. The reason for this is to ensure your child enjoys their reading and achieves personal success. There is no greater feeling for a child when they reach that stage of total engagement, a feeling of "Yes, I can do it"....."Is féidir liom".

- Develop a real love of books with your child. This is definitely one of the greatest gifts we can pass on to our children.
- Share the reading with your child, adult reads a page and child reads next page and so on.
- Use as wide a selection of books/materials as is possible. If you don't have a supply of books at home with the current situation, re-read your child's favourite book and find something different about it.
- Talk/chat with your child about their favourite movies, characters, foods, pets, people, places, sports etc. Ask them for their opinion on\_\_\_\_, pros and cons on\_\_\_\_\_ .
- Write a review (give it a go copy) on their favourite story, pet, book, character, sports person, TV programme.
- Present the review, either written or oral, for an audience, ie, mum, Dad and siblings.
- Letter writing: this may be for older children. See [www.anpost.ie/anpost/schoolbag/primary](http://www.anpost.ie/anpost/schoolbag/primary) for ideas on writing letters.
- Diary: keep a diary of your daily activities during these days, it doesn't have to be written, you can always draw or sketch how you are feeling.

Have fun and stay safe!!

## **Tips for comprehension of reading and building strategies to aid understanding during the reading process:**

All children love storytime and being read to! No child is ever too old for a good story/book. When they relax and listen to a story, their mind creates a "movie" of the story and they are visualising what they are hearing for themselves. The story comes to life for them. It is said that "a picture paints a thousand words" and likewise a good story/book has the potential to transform into the most wonderful series of pictures or personal movie for your child. The children have worked on understanding some comprehension strategies to help their reading. They can use prediction, making connections, answering questions (literal ?, who, what, when, where, why) and first and second class can use visualisation.

Here is a brief outline of how to use these strategies before, during and after reading.

### **Before reading:**

- Talk with your child about their choice of story or book for reading.
- Find out what they already know about the topic/theme or character of the book.
- Make predictions about the story/book: "what do you think will happen when.....?"
- Set a purpose for reading: "I want you to be able to tell me 3/4/5 things about....."

### **During reading:**

- Help your child by listening to them reading and giving all of your attention. Encourage and praise every effort. "Well done, great job, keep going".
- Ensure they use word attack skills when they meet new vocabulary, eg sound it out, break up the word, find a smaller word in the bigger word, re-read the word and sentence, use pictures/illustrations to help with meaning, guess the word based on the content, read on to see if it helps.
- If your child spends too long trying to read a word correctly, simply tell them the word and move on. You don't want them to lose the meaning of the reading.
- Help your child with their understanding of the story by checking in with some simple questions and "fixing up" any misunderstandings when needed.
- Make connections: link what they already know with the new information, also help them to make personal connections with the story, ie "I remember when that happened to me".

### **After reading:**

- Use a variety of literal questions...who, what, when, where, why?
- Help your child develop critical thinking skills by asking questions such as "why do you think ....?", "What if...?", "How do you know...?", "How do you feel about...?" And have them give reasons for their answers.
- Help your child to summarise what has been read: eg Tell me 5 things/sentences about the story or character or theme.
- Chat about your favourite part, likes/dislikes, get them to rate the story/book (1 star, 2 star or 3 star). Finally keep a log of all books read.

