



## PAIRED READING

- Paired reading is an approach to reading that parents, or other competent readers, can use at home to help children develop reading skills.
- Paired reading is easy, quick, inexpensive and enjoyable.
- Parents and reading partners do not need specialist training or knowledge.
- Paired reading does not involve any special equipment or teaching packs.
- Paired Reading uses **Real Books** – books written for children and young readers – fiction, factual or special interest. You do not use school books for Paired Reading. The young reader gets to choose what to read.
- Paired reading works for ordinary young readers and for young readers who are experiencing specific difficulties with reading.
- Paired reading allows children to engage in **reading without pain**. Through paired reading, children can learn and appreciate the value of developing reading skills. They discover the wonderful world of facts and fiction available through books. They can also become 'independent learners'.
- Paired reading allows adults and children to spend some special time together in a positive, productive and enjoyable way.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Real Books. Ideally, you should have quite a wide range of books to choose from. You do not have to buy all of these. You can use the public library and the school library.
- A comfortable place to sit. This might be the sofa or even the floor. You need a place where you can be relaxed and easy, without becoming restless or uncomfortable.
- A quiet, calm environment. Switch off the television and radio. Encourage others in the house to engage in quiet activities too while you are doing paired reading.
- About ten minutes each day (five or six days each week).

## **HOW TO DO PAIRED READING:**

1. Ask the young reader to choose a book. It is important that the young reader choose a book that he or she really wants to read. Ideally, it should not be a school book. At first, the young reader might choose books that are too difficult. Do not worry about this. He or she will learn how to pick books that are within his or her reading scope.
2. Make yourselves comfortable in your special reading place. Make sure you have enough light.
3. Prepare the book. This means – having a look at the book or the story before you begin to read. Examine and discuss the title and the pictures. Discuss what the book or story might be about. This will help the young reader to predict some of the vocabulary he or she will encounter in the text and will help with reading comprehension. Now you are ready to read:
4. **Paired reading has two steps – Reading Together and Reading Alone:**
  - **Reading Together:** You and the young reader read aloud together – word by word. Adjust your speed to match your young partner's speed. Do not rush. If the young reader struggles on a word for more than five seconds or misreads a word, tell him or her the word. Do not ask the young reader to 'sound out' or 'break down' the word. Simply say the word. The young reader should repeat the word and then you both read on together. The young reader can follow the text with his or her finger or with the blunt end of a pencil.
  - **Reading Alone:** While you are reading together, the young reader might decide to try reading alone. He or she should have a **special signal** that lets you know that he or she wants to read alone. This might be a tap on the book or a tap on your arm. The young reader then reads aloud alone. You read along silently. Make sure you follow the text while the young reader is reading alone. If the young reader struggles with a word for more than five seconds or misreads a word while reading alone, you tell him or her the word. The young reader should repeat the word and then you both read aloud together again – until the young reader decides he or she wants to read alone again.

**In brief – Read Together** (tell the word; repeat the word; read on together);

**Tap – Read Alone** (tell the word; repeat the word; read on together again); **Tap** – etc.

## **READING COMPREHENSION**

Ideally, you should follow a paired reading session with a brief comprehension discussion. Five minutes should suffice. Your comprehension discussion should look and feel like **a conversation**, and **not a question-and-answer session**. It definitely must not feel like a test! It should be non-threatening, easy and enjoyable.

Your comprehension discussion should be built around three types of question – literal, inferential and evaluative:

**Literal Questions** will require the young reader to recall facts from the story – such as – the name of the dog; where the boy in the story lived etc. They serve only a limited purpose and can feel a bit like a test – *Were you paying attention?!!!* One or two literal questions will suffice.

**Inferential Questions** will encourage the young reader to consider and discuss the thoughts, feelings and motives of the characters in the story and the cause-effect links between events. They invite opinion – so there are usually no wrong or right answers. You might ask, for example, *why do you suppose the boy's mum was angry? Why do you think he decided to do that? How do you think his friends felt when they heard what happened?* All of these questions can be followed with other questions to develop the discussion – *why do you say that? What makes you feel he was sad?*

You can then involve the young reader further in the story by asking what he or she would do in the situations described in the story, or if the story reminds him or her of anything or anybody from his or her own personal experience.

If you have not finished the story in the session, you might ask the young reader to predict what might happen next, based on what you have read so far.

**Evaluative Questions** invite the young reader to say what he or she liked or did not like about the story and why.



## **SOME RULES**

1. Never use Paired Reading to teach phonics – *sounding out* or *breaking down*. Simply tell the young reader the words he or she struggles with or misreads. The young reader should repeat the word – and then you both read on together.
2. If the young reader struggles with or misreads a word he or she has already read earlier in the text, do not point this out. Simply say the word and ask the young reader to repeat it – and read on.
3. Always go back to Reading Together once you have helped the young reader with a word.
4. Never force the young reader to do Paired Reading when he or she really wants to do something else. Reading should be done willingly and with a positive frame of mind.
5. Do not worry if the young reader is slow to read alone at first – that will come.
6. If the young reader discovers that he or she does not like the chosen book, allow him or her to select a new book. Do not force the young reader to read a book that he or she does not like.
7. Do not require the young reader to read for any longer than ten or fifteen minutes – unless he or she wants to.
8. Praise good reading; praise good effort; praise and encourage Reading Alone. Do not scold for errors – even if the young reader fails on words he or she could read earlier.
9. Paired Reading must never be painful, distressing or conflictual.

## **KEEPING A PAIRED READING DIARY**

Your young reader might enjoy keeping a record of all of the books and stories he or she has read in Paired Reading. You could draw up a chart, showing the date, the name of the book or story, the author and your child's rating. Your young reading partner can rate the books with stars: - one star, good; two stars, very good; three stars, excellent; four stars, 'a must read' etc.

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	RATING