

Golden Rules

- ✓ **DO** talk to your child about anything and everything as much as you can. Involve him in conversations, ask his opinion and listen to his answers.
- ✓ **DO** try to share a book with your child every day. A cuddle and a book at bedtime or after lunch is a really special time together. There is simply no argument that this makes a massive difference to your child's learning to read at school.
- ✗ **DON'T** focus on trying to teach your child particular reading skills at this stage. He probably isn't ready and you might put him off reading altogether.
- ✓ **DO** involve your child as you read simple print around you. Point out signs and labels and read birthday cards and text messages aloud so that she understands that print carries meaning.
- ✗ **DON'T** push reading on your child if he isn't enjoying it or interested. If he doesn't enjoy 'I spy with my little eye' when he's busy doing something else, or too tired, then leave it.
- ✓ **DO** sing songs and nursery rhymes together as often as possible. As well as building your child's vocabulary, it can help us all get on with controversial tasks, such as putting on our coat or washing our hands! As your child gets older, replace some of the words with different rhymes to keep you both interested and amused.
- ✗ **DON'T** bother buying expensive 'educational' computer games or toys to teach your child their letters at this stage. It won't help them to start reading any sooner. Simply put up an alphabet poster in your child's room and talk about the first sound at the start of each word.



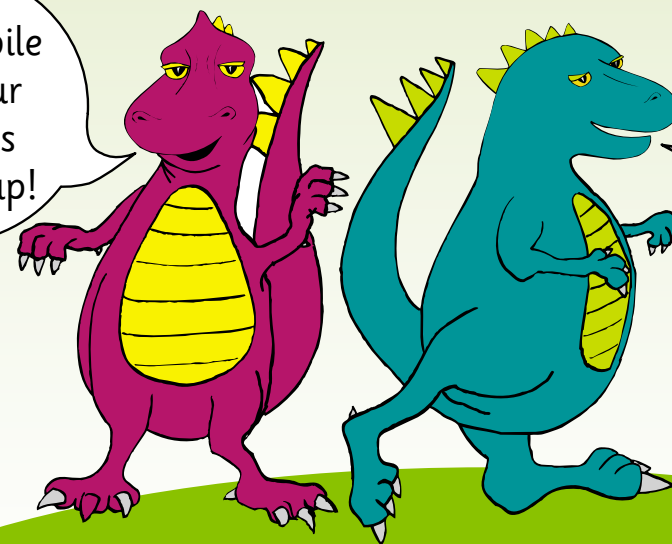
www.hamiltonathome.org.uk



Your Child with...

READING

The mobile dinosaur library's turned up!



Ok, let's go!

AGES: PRE SCHOOL

Simple advice on helping a pre-school child to read...

When our children are very young, there is a lot we can do to include them in the world of reading. This has nothing to do with teaching them any particular reading skills or making them do things they don't want to do! Instead, we aim to build up their motivation so that by the time they start school they WANT to learn to read.

Talk, talk, talk – surprisingly, we know that talking helps reading! Encourage your child to be a chatterbox! The more experience children have in talking and having conversations, the more they will be ready to read when they start school. Now and again, try setting aside special time with your child when you focus on an activity together, such as role-playing their favourite film!

Sharing books – reading books to a child is the best way to involve them in the world of reading. Follow your child's interests when choosing books and make a cuddle and story a lovely way to end the day at bedtime. There is plenty of evidence that children who have been read to, find learning to read less difficult.

Songs and Nursery rhymes – these are great for building pre-reading skills, such as memorising. And of course, whether it's The Wheels on the Bus or Bob the Builder, most children love them!

Signs and Labels around us – from about three years old, many children start to recognise the first letter in their name and enjoy looking out for it on road signs, shop names, book titles. This all helps!

Guess what happened to me – stories don't just belong in books, they can be part of a child's everyday spoken experience as well. People tell stories all the time, whether they are anecdotes, jokes or re-tellings of traditional tales. These home-grown stories give children a great advantage when starting to read.

Parents who read – it's vital that children understand that reading is something adults do. If your child sees that you love books and enjoy reading, then they will want to have a go themselves.

Playing 'I spy' – nowadays children are taught to read by listening for and identifying the sounds in words (often called 'phonics'). Use the first sound in the word (not the letter), to make it easy for your child to join in the game. 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with mmm'.

Going to the library – allow your child to look for and pick his own books, perhaps with your help. And remember to look at the non-fiction sections as well in case dinosaurs, trains, pirates or animals are your child's favourite and best!

