

# Paired Reading - Before You Get Started

Paired (Shared) Reading is a very good way for parents to help with their children's reading. It works really well with most children, and their reading gets a lot better. Also, paired reading fits in very well with the teaching at school, so children do not get mixed up. Most children really like it - it helps them want to read.



## Before You Begin...

### Books

Have a wide range of books to choose from; use books from home, school or the library. Your child should choose the books. Children learn to read better from books they like. Don't worry if it seems a bit too hard. Your child will soon get used to picking books that aren't too hard. Sometimes children will choose books which are too easy. Again, they will learn to pick the books which are best for paired reading. If your child gets fed up with a book and wants to change it, that's OK. Only read a book again if your child wants to.

Graded or Hi/Lo Readers: These are books with a high interest level but a low reading age. They are available in most good educational bookshops. Many schools and libraries will have them.

### Time

When should you do paired reading? Try as hard as you can to do some nearly every day. You only need to do 10 minutes each day, if you want. Don't do more than 15 minutes unless your child really wants to. Do not make children do paired reading when they really want to do something else. If the parents/guardians haven't got time to do 10 minutes a night for 6 nights a week, then granny, grandad or an older brother or sister can help. They must do paired reading in just the same way as mum or dad. It is sometimes a good idea to let them watch it being done, so they know just what to do.

### Place

Where should you do paired reading? Try to find a place that is quiet. Children can't read if it's noisy or there is a lot going on around them. Get away from the TV or turn it off. Try to find a place that's comfortable. If you are not comfortable, you will both be shifting about. Then you won't be able to look carefully and easily at the book together.

### New Ways of Helping

It's often harder for parents to learn new things than it is for children! With paired reading, the hardest things for parents to get used to are:

1. When your child gets a word **wrong**, you just tell them what the word says. Then your child says it after you. You don't make the child struggle and struggle, or 'break it up' or 'sound it out'.
2. When your child gets words **right**, you smile, show that you are pleased and say "good". You don't nag and fuss about the words your child gets wrong. Give praise for: good reading of hard words, getting all the words in a sentence right, putting words right before you do and even making a good guess at a new word.

**Talking Is Good**

Show interest in the book your child has chosen. Talk about the pictures. Talk about what's in the story as your child reads through it. It's best if you talk at the end of a page or section, or your child might lose track of the story. Ask your child what they think will happen next. Listen to your child - don't do all the talking yourself!

**Keeping Notes**

It is a good idea to keep a note of what you have read and how long you have read for. You can also make a note of when your child has read well. The diary could be taken into school, if your child wants, to show to their teacher. This will get them more praise and keep them keen.

**Source: Dyslexia Association of Ireland**