

# GROWING A LOVE OF READING...

Reading – love it or not – it’s the gateway to just about all other knowledge. For kids, mastering the skill of reading is like unlocking the door to learning because it gives them access to knowledge, thinking and skills that are important for succeeding at school.

## At home with reading

How can we help our children learn to read? How do we get kids to love reading? People often think that children begin to read and write when they go to school and that picking up a book is the first step in learning to read. In reality, the building blocks for reading and

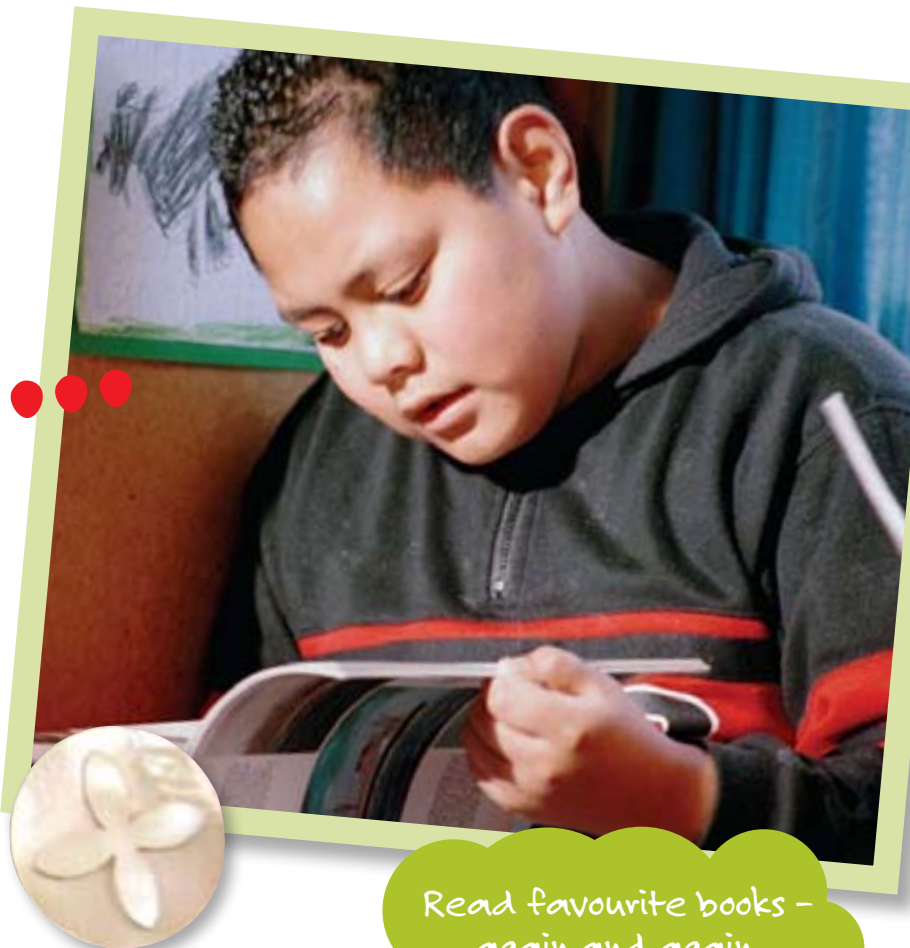
writing are laid in the years before a child even starts school. The different experiences children have from the time they are very young, like going to family get-togethers, shopping, playing with friends, ā and all the talk that goes with these times, are the building blocks. You may have thought

that these were social events, when in fact for children any experiences that involve talking help to prepare them for learning to read.

One of the keys to helping children get ready to read is to talk to them and to read to them – it will help develop their listening skills

too, which is also important in learning to read.

You could go to a library or bookshop to choose a book together. Reading doesn’t have to be limited to books though – read words wherever you find them. Read and talk about road signs, shopping signs, labels, shopping lists, instructions, tickets, even name tags! Most importantly, let your child see you enjoy reading – what better excuse to pick up a good book?



Read favourite books –  
again and again,  
and again.

## Pause, Prompt, Praise

Use this technique if your child isn’t sure of a word.

Wait a few seconds. Give them time to think. Often they will work it out by themselves. (Pause)

If they still don’t know the word, try a couple of the following: (Prompt)

- look at the beginning of the word. Discuss the letters and sound. Talk about words that would make sense in the sentence
- encourage your child to look for clues in the pictures
- ask your child to go back to the beginning of the sentence or to read on to the end of the sentence.

If they still don’t know the word, tell them. Then encourage your child to read the sentence again. (Praise) your child.

# MAKE IT FUN!

## Making progress at school

In the same way children learn to talk and walk at different times, children also make progress at different rates in learning to read. Your child's teacher will be closely monitoring progress and making sure that reading materials are not too hard or too easy. If you are worried that your child is not making progress in reading it is important you discuss your concerns with their teacher. That will also show your child that you think reading is important and that you care about how well they are doing.

## What if a book seems too hard?

Your child should be familiar with most of the books they bring home, but if a book is too hard, take turns at reading different sentences or pages, or read it to your child instead. If your child often brings home books that are too hard, talk to their teacher. As a general guide, a book is probably too hard if your child has difficulty with any more than five words in a hundred.



## Ideas and activities

- talk, talk, talk with your child – not just instructions, but chat about their day
- read different books together and read often
- select a favourite book together
- visit a library together to find a new 'favourite' book
- read aloud to your child
- talk about the pictures in a book
- sing songs and waiata, say poems and rhymes together
- share the joy of rhyming books – laugh together, try to guess what might come next
- some schools encourage parents to visit the school library with their children – ask your child's teacher about library times
- listen to tapes and CDs – libraries often have a selection
- encourage your child to retell their favourite stories – from books or from their own experiences
- encourage your child to make up plays – join in or be the audience!
- play word games – e.g. 'Simon says ...', words that rhyme, 'I spy'
- make up silly poems
- read books over and over again – practising is what counts
- most of all, make reading fun!

## A special time together

### Make reading ...

- quiet and relaxing
- a time to sit close to your child
- 10–15 minutes without interruption
- an enjoyable, interesting and special time
- an opportunity to praise your child.

