Rothwell Schools

READING FLUENCY

A guide for parents and carers

Fluent readers understand more, enjoy more and learn more.





WHY DOES IT MATTER?

When reading is fluent, your child's brain can focus on understanding what they're reading as a whole rather than working to decode each individual word. Fluency is what makes the shift from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'.

ONE REALLY IMPORTANT NOTE

Reading fluency is not about reading fast. It's about reading smoothly and expressively, in a way that unlocks understanding and meaning.

A child who races through a book at top speed but can't tell you about what they have read is not a fluent reader. A child who reads at a comfortable, natural pace with expression and understanding is.

WHAT IS READING FLUENCY?

When children first learn to read, they have to work hard to decipher every word. Over time, reading should become easier. Words that once needed sounding out are recognised instantly and sentences flow together. When reading aloud, children's voices begin to rise and fall naturally. That is fluency.

FLUENT READING HAS THREE PARTS:

ACCURACY
Reading the words correctly.

AUTOMATICITY
Reading without having to work hard to decode every word.

EXPRESSION
Reading in a way that sounds like natural speech, bringing the text to life as the author intended.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AT HOME TO HELP?

1 READ ALOUD TO YOUR CHILD, EVEN WHEN THEY CAN READ INDEPENDENTLY



Your child hears what fluent reading sounds like – the expression, the pauses, the way your voice changes. Children benefit from hearing fluent reading through primary school!

2 TRY ECHO READING



You read a sentence aloud with expression, then your child reads the same sentence straight after you, copying your expression. It's low pressure and great for talking about books!

3 READ TOGETHER, AT THE SAME TIME



Read the same text aloud together. You set the pace and expression. When they feel confident, they can carry on alone. You can jump in again if they get stuck.

4 WHEN YOU LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD READ, NOTICE THE EXPRESSION, NOT JUST THE WORDS



Listen for expression – do they sound like they're talking or reading a list? Talk about how characters feel and how our voices change with emotions.

5 RE-READ FAVOURITE BOOKS



Re-reading familiar texts builds fluency. Words become easier each time, so your child can focus on reading with expression and understanding.

6 MAKE READING ALOUD FUN



Reading aloud should never feel like a test. Take turns, read to them if needed, and keep it enjoyable. If it becomes a battle, speak to your child's teacher so we can work together.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AT HOME TO HELP? (CONT...)

SPEED If your child reads at a comfortable pace with good expression and understanding, their speed is likely to be fine. Please don't worry about timing or encouraging them to read quickly. Speed usually takes care of itself.

MISTAKES All readers make mistakes. What matters is whether your child notices and corrects them themselves. If they misread a word and then go back and fix it, that's a good sign.

COMPARISON Children develop reading fluency at different rates. Some will read smoothly and expressively early on; others will take longer. What matters is that your child is reading – all reading is rehearsal.

WHAT NOT TO WORRY ABOUT

Focus on progress and understanding, not perfection. Every child's journey is unique.

Reading doesn't need to be long to be valuable. Even a few minutes every day helps.

Your encouragement and support make the biggest difference. You're your child's best reading role model!

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

If you have any questions about your child's reading or would like more ideas for supporting reading at home, please speak to your child's class teacher.