



## REAL

### Raising Early Achievement in Literacy

**This leaflet explains how you can support your child in their development of reading and writing skills.**



### What does REAL stand for?

**REAL** stands for 'Raising Early Achievement in Literacy.'

The term "**literacy**" is used by some to simply describe reading and writing, but in fact **literacy** covers a much wider range of learning.

**Literacy** in the **early years** includes talking about books, print in the environment, **early** mark making and writing, as well as sharing books and reading.

Research shows that one in four children, start primary school in England without the necessary language and communication skills.

### Why parents need to be involved?

Parents are the child's first educator. From the day they are born parents need to be talking, singing and reading to their children everyday in order for them to be able to grow up with all the necessary skills they will need to go through school and gain life skills.

### Top Tips for Developing Oral Language

- Build up your child's sentences. Listen carefully to what your child says and repeat it back, adding words so that you are extending their learning of how to use language. For example, if your child says "I can see a dog.", you could say "Yes, you can see a big black dog."
- Give your child choices so that they have to use language and not just give a one word yes or no answer. For example, "Would you like an apple or an orange?"
- It is really important that you get down to your child's level so that they can see your facial expressions.
- Follow your child's interests'. Join in and copy their play. Give your child time to start a conversation and take turns to speak, modelling how conversation works.
- Make sure you have their attention and that they are looking and listening.
- A child who is learning language often makes mistakes. You can help them in a positive way simply by repeating back the sentence in the correct way. For example if your child says "I sawed a dog.", you could say "Oh, you saw a dog did you?"
- Create lots of opportunities for exciting talk by sharing in different activities with your child e.g. playing a game, sharing a book, going to the park or even letting your child help to put the shopping away.
- Sing songs and rhymes. This helps children to tune into the rhythm of words

## Top Tips for developing writing skills

- Encourage your child to make marks and give them the freedom to explore and experiment with the different marks they make.
- It is important for children to develop their shoulder, elbow, arm, hand and finger muscles in preparation for writing. Give children the opportunity to make large and fine movements with their arms and fingers.
- Provide your child with resources they can mark make with e.g. painting with water outside, drawing with chalks, making marks in mud using sticks, making marks in sand or foam using their fingers, drawing and writing using pencils, pens, felt-tips etc.
- Value your child's earliest mark making attempts and ask them what their writing 'says'. Remember, all forms of mark making are meaningful for your child.
- Just as with reading, parents also play an important part in modelling writing. For example, as you write a birthday card or a shopping list, talk to your child about what you are writing and why you are writing it, so they understand the different purposes of writing.
- Children love to copy their parents and if they see you writing, they are far more likely to copy this activity!

## Top Tips for Using

### Environmental Print with Young Children

- Use environmental print around the home such as cereal box logos and ask your child to find a letter from their name on the box. They may be able to recognise the word or identify a letter in the word.
- Make reading fun and purposeful! It is a valuable opportunity for parents to talk about letters, sounds and words.
- Use your phone to take pictures of different signs and then look at the pictures with your child at home or even make a small book for your child to 'read'.
- Help your child to sort logos that you have cut out from items around the house into categories e.g. food, drinks, snacks etc..
- Look out for simple signs during a walk to the shops or on a car journey e.g. stop sign, pedestrian crossing, one way.



## Top Tips for Reading

- Choose a quiet, relaxed time. Bedtime is often a good time.
- Find a comfy place without too many distractions such as the television.
- Talk about the words and pictures in the book.
- Add silly sounds, animal sounds etc.— this will bring the book to life!
- Repeat favorite stories. Children learn through repetition.
- Read poems and rhyming stories. Rhymes help your child learn to read.
- Reflect on the story. Which was their favorite character or part of the story?
- Don't worry if your child flicks through pages. Talk about what you see on that page.
- You don't have to read a whole story.
- Go with your child's imagination. Follow their lead when they talk about other things that are not related to the book.
- Above all, enjoy the story with your child and have fun!

