



Information Sheet

An Introduction to Paired Reading

What is Paired Reading?

Paired reading is a simple, evidence-based strategy where a confident reader supports a developing reader by reading together aloud. It helps children build fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.



The key components include:

- A skilled reader (parent, teacher or peer) reads alongside a child who is developing their reading skills.
- The focus is on fluency, enjoyment and confidence, rather than correcting every mistake. It is an error free approach.
- The developing reader looking at the written text as the confident reader reads aloud, as evidence has shown this aids the development of reading skills.
- It can be used at home or in school, providing a consistent approach across settings.

Why Use Paired Reading?

Paired reading is an effective approach to learning to read as it has been found to:

- Builds confidence and reduces reading anxiety.
- Improves fluency and word recognition.
- Encourages comprehension through discussion.
- Makes reading a positive, shared experience.
- Encourage enjoyment of books and positive reading habits.



- Provide immediate support when a child struggles with a word and an error free approach to maintain learners' confidence.
- Strengthen bonding between adult and child or between peers through the enjoyment of reading together.
- Help children access texts that may be slightly above their independent reading level, which is essential for their exposure to a varied and wide vocabulary.

How to Do Paired Reading?

1. Choose a 'real' book or high interest text together (preferably not a reading scheme book).
 - Let the child pick a text they enjoy (story, non-fiction, comic, leaflet).
 - Ensure it is age-appropriate and engaging.
2. Read aloud together (in unison).
 - Sit side by side and read aloud together at the same pace. Match the pace to the child's speed, keeping voices in sync.
 - Allow the child to read all words they can already access and are fluent with.
 - Use expression and intonation to model fluent reading and aid comprehension of the text.
3. Encourage independence/Pause' Signal
 - The child can signal when they want to read alone (for example, a gentle tap or agreed gesture).
 - When the child gives the signal, the adult stops reading and listens quietly.
 - If they struggle, return to reading together until they feel confident again.
4. Support with tricky words.



- If the child hesitates, wait a few seconds and then aid them by saying the word. This keeps the reading flow positive and encouraging.
- Ask the child to repeat the word whilst looking at the written text.

5. Praise and encouragement/

- Give positive feedback for effort and success. Give specific praise (e.g., *"I like how you read that tricky word!"* or *"You sounded just like the character!"*).
- Celebrate progress and effort.
- Talk about the story, ask questions and encourage the child to share their thoughts.

Tips for Success

- Keep sessions short (10–15 minutes daily is effective).
- Focus on enjoyment, not perfection.
- Let children see you enjoying reading, too!
- Praise effort, not just accuracy.
- Choose a quiet, relaxed space without distractions.
- Talk about the story before and after reading. Discuss characters, events, or what might happen next.
- Allow the child to choose varied texts to keep interest high.
- Be patient; fluency develops gradually with practice.

"Reading can take you places you have never been before." - Dr Seuss