7 Handy Tips to support your child's literacy skills;

1. Make the time

Just 10 minutes of reading with your child each day is one of the best ways you can support your child's education.

2. Choose different types of books

Reading as wide a range of books as possible opens your child up to different types of language and different ways of writing. You and your child might take it in turns to choose what you read together; you might share a treasured book from your childhood; or they might introduce you to the latest playground craze. You might choose something challenging that stretches their understanding and introduces them to new ideas or you might curl up with an old favourite. You won't both love every book you share, but reading a wide range of different books can help children to develop their own taste in books and it can open them up to books and genres they wouldn't necessarily choose themselves.

3. Take turns to read

Sometimes you'll want to listen to your child read aloud – it's great for developing their fluency and expression and gives you the chance to you to check they're not struggling with any of the words. At other times you can read aloud, modelling expressive reading and letting them enjoy the story. It could depend on the book you've chosen. Finding ways to read together can be really effective and enjoyable – you might read a paragraph each or take over every time a certain character speaks. By both reading and listening your child gets the best of both worlds, learning more than if they simply read aloud to you or listen to you.

4. Talk about the book – asking your child questions

Asking for their opinion or for them to make predictions can be an important way of helping them to think about what they're reading. As a rule, open questions that begin with 'how' and 'why' tend to be more engaging rather than simple recall questions ('How do you think Mole is feeling as he enters the Wild Wood? Why?' might work better than 'What is Mole afraid of?'). If you can, try to get your child to refer back to the text to tell you how they know the answer ('How do you know he's afraid?'). Above all ask questions and talk about what you're reading because you are genuinely interested in what your child thinks, rather than just to check they can find the right answer.

5. Pay attention to the language

When reading we can often take children's understanding of words or phrases for granted. By checking they're following, explaining the meaning or even looking up unfamiliar words and phrases together, you can widen your child's vocabulary and support them to make wider sense of the story. Words and phrases are the bricks which writers use to build a story and understanding them is the key to unlocking the meaning of a passage.

6. Enjoy reading

Continuing to read with your child right through primary school can have great educational benefits, but it can also be ten minutes of respite from hectic family life to read, think and talk together. By all means ask questions and discuss vocabulary, but don't be afraid to lose yourselves in a good story too. Helping your child to love books is an important goal. You never know, that ten minutes of reading time might just stretch to twenty…

7. Visit National Literacy Trust for more advice (**www.literacytrust.org.uk**)