Helping your child to read, write, speak and listen

In the early years of primary school, students learn through rhymes, story-telling and following along with their favourite book. Learning to write begins with scribbles and drawings. The activities below will help your child develop these skills:

- Share rhymes and songs and encourage your child to join in.
- Have a dress-up box for your child to use for imaginative play.
- Listen to your child and respond to their ideas with questions and ask for more information.
- Point out and talk about letters and words all around you, for example on cereal boxes, car number plates, signs.
- Cook simple things together. Read out the recipe, talk through what you are doing.
- Join the Malvern library.
- Provide easy access to materials for writing and drawing.
- It is important that you show your child how you read and write every day for different purposes, for example shopping lists, letters, cards, magazines, books, recipes, newspapers.

STORY-TELLING

Story-telling is a great way to extend your child’s language and listening skills, as well as expanding their imagination. Story-telling might be about a favourite character from a book or television program, a family member or a favourite toy.

Here are some tips for starting story-telling:
- Make it exciting, with different voices, puppets, props and finger play.
- Start with what interests your child.
- Create a character and setting.

READING TOGETHER

Reading is an important way to make the link from spoken words to written words. Reading to your child is a valuable thing to do. Here are some tips:
- Encourage your child to select books, magazines or multimedia stories.
- Discuss the pictures in books and encourage your child to talk about them too.
- Share wordless picture story books to develop imagination, ideas and vocabulary by naming the pictures.
- Re-read your child’s favourite books and stories.
- Look for rhymes, rhythm and repetition in books.

BOOK TALKS

Book talks are an important part of reading. Chat about the book before, during and after reading and encourage your child to talk about their ideas and ask questions about the book. Talk about what authors and illustrators do. Point out things about the book— for example, the front cover, the spine, the contents pages and the title.

Here are some questions you can ask at different times before, during and after reading:
- What would you like to read about?
• Would you like to choose a book you know?
• Look at the cover- what do you think this book is about?
• What is happening in the picture?
• How could we work out this tricky word?
• What do you think is going to happen next?
• What was your favourite part of the book?
• Who was your favourite character in the story? Why did you like that character?
• If you could change the ending of this book, what would it be?

Reading and writing go hand in hand. Learning to write begins with scribbles and drawings. This is an important first step and should be encouraged. Support your child to make their own books with pictures and then 'read' the story to you.

By getting involved in your child’s learning, you will be making a big difference to their future. Research shows that children who are immersed in language and literature-rich environments are likely to achieve at a higher level in all areas than those who aren't.

In other words: KIDS WHO READ, SUCCEED!