

Love to Read: Reception



A programme to inspire and sustain a love of reading among reception children

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Introduction: Six principles to promote reading for pleasure

The Love to Read Reception programme aims to develop and support young children's reading enjoyment, their skills to select books they will enjoy, and the quality of their shared reading experiences with others.

The Love to Read Reception Programme is underpinned by six research-informed principles:

Access

Teacher definition: Children have access to books at school which align with their reading interests, preferences, abilities, lives and experiences.

Child definition: I can find books I enjoy

Choice

Teacher definition: Children are able to choose their own books and are developing skills to do this well.

Child definition: I know how to pick books I will enjoy

Time

Teacher definition: Children have regular quality time to read books they enjoy in school and at home

Child definition: I have time to enjoy reading at school and at home

Connection

Teacher definition: Children can access and choose books which feel relevant to them and their reading interests/preferences.

Child definition: I can find books I connect with

Social

Teacher definition: Children have the time, skills and confidence to share and discuss books with others

Child definition: I enjoy sharing and discussing books with others

Success

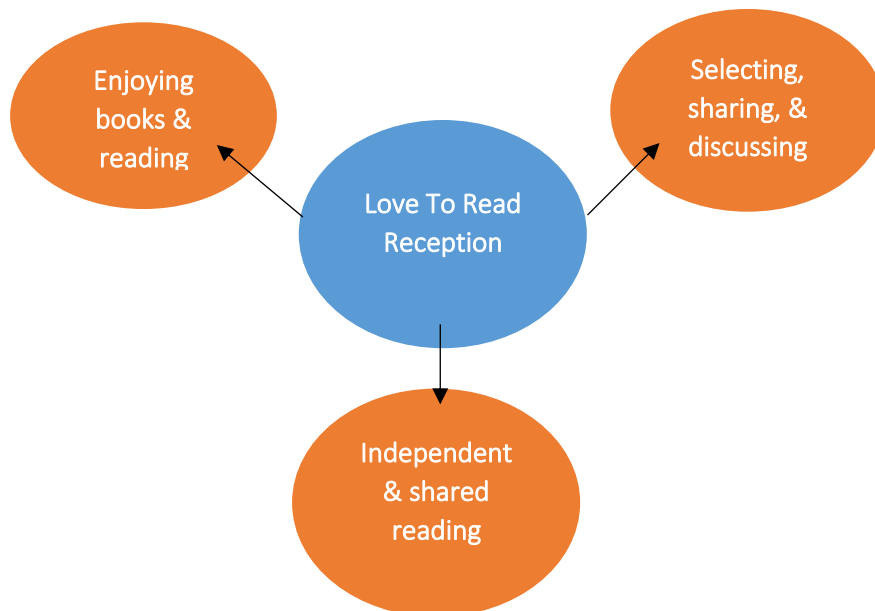
Teacher definition: Children have positive reading experiences, and recognise their growing success as readers

Child definition: I enjoy books and reading

This programme should take approximately 2 hours to read, with four hours of preparation time prior to delivery. Throughout the Love to Read Reception programme you will find research summaries related to each of the six principles, questions to prompt reflection and discussion with colleagues, and classroom activities to embed the six research-informed principles into practice. We would strongly encourage staff delivering the programme to familiarise themselves with the entire programme prior to delivery. **The programme is intended to be delivered over 10 consecutive weeks, with approximately 1 hour (over 2-3 sessions) each week.** Please note, this programme is intended to introduce reading for pleasure pedagogy into reception classes, which should then be continued to be embedded and sustained throughout school.

Why reading enjoyment is so important

In the earliest stages of learning to read, it is essential that children are not only taught the necessary skills to become independent readers, but that they also develop a love and interest in books and reading, so that they are choosing to read, both independently and with others, both within school and outside of school. Indeed, research demonstrates that children's early reading development relies on both the 'skill' and the 'will' (Lepola et al., 2005). Therefore, the Love to Read Reception programme aims to ensure reading for interest and enjoyment is embedded within reception year classes alongside other research-informed reading instruction.



This programme is for reception year children in England. It focuses on fostering positive reading attitudes (e.g., enjoyment of books and reading), skills (e.g., to self-select books they will enjoy; share and discuss books with others) and behaviours (e.g., more volitional independent and shared reading: volitional reading reflects reading that children are initiating/choosing to do themselves). We recognise that in reception year, children are at

the earliest stage of their journey towards becoming independent readers. Therefore, volitional reading practices will include showing an interest in books, being asked to be read to, independently choosing to practice their decoding skills with different text types. Volitional reading is not about demonstrating reading competence but reading interest and enjoyment.

The Love to Read Reception programme also aims to develop teachers' depth of research knowledge in relation to principles to inspire and sustain a love of reading. It provides research insights and aligns these with suggested classroom practices to support young children's reading attitudes, skills and behaviours.

Why reading books is so important

There is a considerable body of research demonstrating the importance of books for children's reading and language development, throughout primary school (Mol & Bus, 2011; Nation et al., 2022; Torppa et al., 2019). Reading in reception includes teaching children the skills to become independent readers, but also class-based reading, where a teacher or other member of school staff reads aloud, providing opportunities for the class to come together and relax, laugh and learn together. Recent research highlights the importance of foregrounding reading for enjoyment and interest in primary schools (Boyask et al., 2022), encouraging children to make emotional connections to books, and each other, and promoting social reading experiences. Indeed, Lever-Chain (2008) argues that by age 5, young children have often formed negative attitudinal beliefs about reading, or perceptions that reading is simply a matter of skill and proficiency; therefore early literacy experiences need to focus on nurturing and supporting both the skill and the will. Developing the will is the central aim of this programme, however it is essential to note that the 'will' to read does not reside solely within the child. While some children may be more predisposed to want to read or enjoy reading (Medford & McGeown, 2016), teachers and school staff can also create 'motivating contexts' (Marinak et al., 2010); practices, experiences and relationships which inspire and sustain a love of reading among children.

Developing an interest in books and reading sets children on a path to become independent readers, who choose to read and enjoy reading throughout primary school. Importantly, the benefits of volitional reading has been found to extend beyond reading and language benefits, to also include social and emotional benefits such as wellbeing (e.g., Clark & Teravinen-Goff, 2018; McGeown et al., 2020), reduced prejudice and increased empathy (e.g., Vezzali et al., 2015), and a greater knowledge and understanding of the world, themselves, and others (Eekhof et al., 2022; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021).

Over the last decade there has been an increased understanding and use of research-informed approaches to optimally develop children's word reading skills (specifically systematic phonics) (Castles et al., 2018). Furthermore, research exploring the reciprocal relationship between reading motivation and reading skill has demonstrated that earlier reading skill is a stronger predictor of later motivation, than motivation is of skill (Toste et al., 2020). For this reason, a focus on developing children's reading skills is essential – however this should not be at the expense of reading enjoyment. Indeed, systematic phonics instruction should be embedded within a context in which children are

simultaneously developing a love and interest in books, words, and stories. Research demonstrates the importance of focusing on reading enjoyment in the earliest stages of learning to read, alongside phonics instruction (McGeown et al., 2015), in addition to making phonics instruction fun and enjoyable in its own right!

National Primary Curriculum

The Love to Read Reception programme has been designed to nurture and sustain a love of reading, and this focus is reflected in the National Primary Curriculum. For example: 'The National Curriculum for England aims to ensure that all pupils: develop a habit of reading widely and often, both for pleasure and information' (p13)

Department for Education: Reading Framework (2023)

The importance of developing a culture of reading for pleasure is also reflected in the recent Department for Education (2023) Reading Framework. This guidance highlights the importance of schools having a strategic approach to supporting reading for pleasure, rather than an eclectic mix of activities. Within the guidance, practices such as being read to, supporting book talk, library use, providing time to read and social reading environments are all encouraged. These practices align with the Love to Read principles.

How to use Love to Read Reception

Love to Read Reception has been designed as a whole class programme, to nurture a love of books and reading among all students. However, it is important to recognise that all children will start school with varying home literacy environments and experiences of reading, and differ in their predispositions to enjoying or being interested in books and reading. While reading enjoyment may come naturally to some children, it is important to recognise and support those children from whom it does not.

Before introducing Love to Read Reception into your classroom, teachers and school leaders should familiarise themselves with the programme and delivery guidance.

We recommend that Love to Read Reception is delivered for **10 consecutive weeks, for approximately one hour each week (typically split over 2-3 sessions)**. However, after this initial delivery, we stress the importance of continuing to embed a culture of reading for enjoyment and interest within your class, revising activities (e.g., supporting book choice) as required.

The Love to Read Reception programme is underpinned by six principles: **access, choice, time, connection, social and success**. In the next section, summaries of each are provided, in addition to activities to embed these principles into practice.

Access

Teacher definition:

Children have access to books at school which align with their reading interests, preferences, abilities, lives and experiences

Child definition:

I can find books I enjoy



Access

Teacher definition:

Children have access to books at school which align with their reading interests, preferences, abilities, lives and experiences.

Child definition:

I can find books I enjoy



Summary:

Access to quality book provision in school is essential to inspire and sustain a love of reading, as children are more motivated to read when they have access to books which reflect their lives, interests, experiences, preferences and abilities (McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). In the UK, there is considerable variation in access to quality books. For example, it is estimated that a quarter of disadvantaged primary schools in England do not have a library and 40% of primary schools report having no dedicated school library budget (Tyler, 2021). Furthermore, inequalities in access to books are reflected in children's homes, with children from higher income families being more likely to have books at home (Clark et al., 2021) than children from lower income families. Efforts to increase the quality of your school book provision is important and we would encourage school leaders and teaching staff to consider all options available to do this, for example, external sources of support, links with local libraries, book-gifting, fundraising, etc.

In addition to providing access to books to support children's independent reading practices, reading aloud in class is an important way to inspire reading enjoyment, increase children's access to a wide range of books (Gambrell, 2011) and introduces children to more diverse books and authors than they would naturally encounter. Reading aloud also allows children to access more challenging books than they are able to read independently, and introduces them to new vocabulary (Nation et al., 2022). Indeed, being read to can be hugely enjoyable, relaxing, and fun, and for some children, this may form some of their first positive experiences with books.

Reflection

- What are the key messages from this section for you and your colleagues?
- Reflect on how access is currently supported within your class and school context.

Classroom activities:

Within the next section, activities are provided to support children's access to quality books. We expect the core activities (in bold boxes) to be completed during the implementation of Love to Read Reception, and optional supplementary activities are available if you wish to extend your practice (in lighter boxes).

Preparation

- Looking at the core activities and delivery guidance so that you feel prepared to deliver Love to Read this week.
- Are there any 'access' resource implications that need to be discussed with your school leadership team prior to delivery?
- Decide when in the school week you will schedule these sessions, thinking about when children will be most responsive to them.

Activity A.1. Library Audit

- Carry out an audit of current library/class book provision to evaluate whether school book provision reflects the interests, preferences, lives, experiences and abilities of students in your class. You can ask children to get involved in this to get their perspectives – which books will they enjoy and which should be donated. Having lots of books available that no children will enjoy or be interested in reading, could put them off reading, and/or make it harder to find books they will like.
- Remove outdated books or those in poor condition - old, tattered books can put children off reading – unless they are favourite reads! When carrying out a library audit, ensure you look at book provision from the perspectives of all children within your class – what may be good book provision to one, may not be to another, so it's essential that there really are books for all and that future purchasing keeps this in mind.
- It is likely that this activity will be carried out independently by the teacher/teaching staff as part of preparation for the delivery of Love to Read, however, we'd strongly encourage you to seek children's input into the books to keep/remove. This activity will also refresh your own knowledge of which books are available in your school

Activity A.2. Organise the class and/or school library

- Book provision should look as exciting and inviting as possible. Organise books in a way that is inviting for young learners, which allows them to see which books are on offer – having forward facing books can really help with this. Recruiting the help of reception year children, can also help children to be involved, giving them ownership over the reading space.

Activity A.3. It's Book To Know You

- Find out more about your young learners, what they like (e.g., topics) and what they are interested in, particularly those who have shown less interest in reading. Follow this up by browsing what books are currently on offer in the school, and whether this can inform new purchases for the school or local library borrowing.

Activity A.4. Reading aloud

- Reading aloud introduces children to a range of quality books, where the teacher reads to the class, making the reading experience as enjoyable and exciting as possible (e.g., with funny voices, dramatic pauses for excitement etc). Give children the opportunity to vote on which book they'd like you to read next, so they are actively involved in the selection of books read. Try to move beyond the 'well known' books, and use this as an opportunity to extend their reading experiences. Decide the optimal duration for these read aloud session (e.g., 4 x 10 mins rather than 2 x 20 if more appropriate) and allow movement breaks if you think this will help students to pay attention/enjoy this more.

Activity A.5. Fundraising, book swaps or donations

- Organise a school fundraising activity to raise money for books, involving the whole school community. Work with children to create a list of books that you would like for school and encourage the local community to 'sponsor a book'. You can do this by creating a wish list and asking your local children's bookstore to keep a list of the books requested. Perhaps ask local businesses, community, school governors etc. to buy a book from the wish list – perhaps in response to a sponsored activity. Alternatively, organise a book swap or donation, asking families in the school community to bring in books from home that they no longer read and swap them with other families or donate to the school.

Activity A.6. Draw upon external sources of support Fundraising, book swaps or donations

- UK literacy organisations, and others, often provide resources and recordings (e.g., author reading events) to inspire and sustain a love of reading among children. Browse the different options available and share useful resources with colleagues.

Activity A.7. Local library

- Organise a class trip to your local library if you have a library nearby. This can be a great opportunity for children to listen to a story and browse the collection of books on offer. Invite parents/guardians along too, and encourage them to sign up for their own library card. Teachers can also use this time to collect books to be used for whole class reading.
- Encourage children to take their favourite book home and show it and read it with their parent.

Choice

Teacher definition:

Children are able to choose their own books and are developing the skills to do this well.

Child definition:

I can choose books I enjoy



Choice

Teacher definition:

Children are able to choose their own books and are developing the skills to do this well.

Child definition:

I can choose books I enjoy



Summary:

In the earliest stages of learning to read, children may have very little experience of reading, or being read to, and therefore may not know the types of books they will enjoy. However, choice is important (e.g., Merga, 2017), and children know enough about themselves and their interests/preferences to be supported to apply this to choosing books. Research shows, albeit with older children, that providing choice provides a sense of control and agency which is important for children's motivation and engagement in reading (Guthrie et al., 2007; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). In addition, providing choice not only in books, but how to engage in, and with, reading activities is important (Gambrell, 2011; Brandt et al., 2021).

Children will start school varying considerably in their early literacy experiences. Those with more experience of shared book reading may have a better understanding of the types of books they like, and recognise more books too, as a result of previous reading experiences. On the other hand, those with less literacy experiences, may need more support and introduction to the breadth of books available. For some children, too much choice can be overwhelming and Gambrell (2011) suggests that some children may benefit from 'bounded choice', that is, the option to choose from a range of books which the teacher has selected to align with their interests/preferences, discussing with them why they may or may not like different books. This scaffolded approach is important until children can more confidently select their own books.

In terms of teaching children strategies to choose books, even older and more experienced readers tend to use quite poor or random strategies, highlighting the importance of explicitly teaching this (Merga & Roni, 2017). Encouraging children to reflect on their interests and preferences is important, as is using strategies such as the title, illustrations, text difficulty, blurb, book length, topic, recommendations from others or reviews.

In addition to developing children's knowledge, skills and experience to make good reading choices, schools should also ensure they have optimal structure to support student choice. School libraries, bookshelves, reading corners and books displays all need to be carefully considered to facilitate and ease reading choices. School librarians (Merga, 2019), knowledgeable teachers (Cremin et al., 2014), school leaders, and children themselves, can all provide input into this.

Reflection

- What are the key messages from this section for you and your colleagues?
- Reflect on how choice is currently supported within your class and school context.

Classroom activities:

Within the next section, activities are provided to support children's early skills and confidence to choose books they will enjoy. We expect the core activities (in bold boxes) to be completed during the implementation of Love to Read Reception, and optional supplementary activities are available if you wish to extend your practice (in lighter boxes).

Preparation

- Looking at the core activities and delivery guidance so that you feel prepared to deliver Love to Read this week.
- Are there any 'choice' resource implications that need to be discussed with your school leadership team prior to delivery?
- Decide when in the school week you will schedule these sessions, thinking about when children will be most responsive to them.

Activity Ch.1 Optimise structure to support book choice

- Think carefully about how books are organised and displayed in the school library and/or class reading spaces– are they organised in a way that can help reception year children find books they will enjoy? Talk to children about how books are organised in the class reading space/school library - this will help them to understand what is on offer, and how best to find it.

Activity Ch.2. Book choice strategies

- In the earliest stages of learning to read, children will have had no, or very little, guidance on how to choose a book – supporting this skill is essential. Discuss with children the different strategies they can use for choosing a book. For example, thinking about what they like, what they are interested in, looking at the pictures, seeing if it's something they can read themselves, getting suggestions from others. Start to talk about what strategies you use when you pick a book and encourage children to discuss and share their strategies for selecting books with each other.

Activity Ch.3. Scaffold reading choices

- For children in the earliest stages of book choice, the options available can be overwhelming and so it can be difficult for them to choose a book they like. Therefore, providing a few options (e.g., suggest 3-4 books you think the child will like) can help. This gives them autonomy over what they read, but ensures choice is not too overwhelming. With experience, encourage children to articulate their strategies to select from the 3-4 books presented, or talk through with them good strategies to choose between the different books on offer.

Activity Ch.4 Make personal book recommendations

- Make personalised suggestion for students, based on the types of things you think they will like, if giving them a book to look at or read, say why you chose it for them. Encourage children to make suggestions for their peers too.

Activity Ch.5 Displays and book reviews to support choice

- Create visual displays of books across your school, on your school's website or in newsletters to parents to highlight books of interest/favourite reads and use these approaches to introduce new books into the classroom and support student choice.

Time

Teacher definition:

Children have regular quality time to read books they enjoy in school and at home

Child definition:

I have time to enjoy reading at school and at home



Time

Teacher definition:

Children have regular quality time to read books they enjoy in school and at home

Child definition:

I have time to enjoy reading at school and at home



Summary:

Time spent reading improves children's reading and language skills. For example, research demonstrates that book-language introduces children to much more varied and diverse vocabulary, and complex syntactic structures, that they would encounter in daily life (Nation et al., 2022). Therefore books are a great way to introduce new words and sentences, which is particularly important for children from lower income homes, who often start school with poorer vocabulary knowledge (Sosu & Ellis, 2014). Furthermore, time spent reading books, particularly in the extra time outside of school, has been shown to develop reading skills (Mol & Bus 2011; Torppa et al., 2019). Spending time inspiring, encouraging and supporting both volitional independent reading (i.e., choosing to practice decoding skills independently) and shared reading (i.e., reading with others) can therefore play a huge role in the development of children's language and reading skills, creating an essential foundation for subsequent learning. Of course, books also offer so much more than this, and provide children with opportunities to relax, laugh, connect with others, learn more about their interests and discover new ones!

Reflection

- What are the key messages from this section for you and your colleagues?
- Reflect on how time is currently supported within your class and school context.

Classroom activities:

Within the next section, activities are provided to ensure there is quality time in school to nurture a love of reading. We expect the core activities (in bold boxes) to be completed during the implementation of Love to Read Reception, and optional supplementary activities are available if you wish to extend your practice (in lighter boxes).

Preparation

- Looking at the core activities and delivery guidance so that you feel prepared to deliver Love to Read this week.
- Are there any 'time' resource implications that need to be discussed with your school leadership team prior to delivery?
- Decide when in the school week you will schedule these sessions, thinking about when children will be most responsive to them.

Activity T.1. Regular reading for enjoyment time

- Ensure regular reading for enjoyment becomes a routine part of the school day/week. Giving protected, dedicated and routine time for reading for pleasure will embed the importance of it within your class, and you can ensure this time is uninterrupted by displaying a 'currently reading' sign on your class door so others know not to disturb you. Reading for enjoyment time may take different forms – it may include reading aloud to children, encouraging children to browse or read books themselves, sharing books with classmates. The most important thing is that this is a time that children enjoy. Discuss with children the different types of activities you can do during 'reading for fun' time.

Activity T.2. Encourage reading time at home

- A resource has been created to support families: **Love to Read Reception: Information for families**, to familiarise them with the six principles and suggest home based activities to support reading for pleasure and to encourage parents/guardians to establish regular reading routines with their child. Please send this home.
- You could also supplement this with a reading newsletter, with details about the books being read in school and information about local reading/library events. You can also inform parents of future reading events, for example, aligned with World Book Day, and encourage parents to come to their child's school and read with their child. Discourage the need for costumes which puts financial pressure on families.

Activity T.3. The travelling suitcase

- Introduce a weekly "travelling suitcase" which contains a book that children have enjoyed, cuddly toy, hot chocolate, biscuits. Encourage adults at home (e.g. parents, siblings, grandparents) to dedicate one evening to share this experience with their child.

Connection

Teacher definition:

Children can access and choose books which feel relevant to them and their reading interests/preferences.

Child definition:

I can find book I connect with



Connection

Teacher definition:

Children can access and choose books which feel relevant to them and their reading interests/preferences

Child definition:

I can find books I connect with



Summary:

Feeling connected to a book or a story shared in class can help to inspire a love of reading, as children start to recognise the links between books and their own interests, lives and preferences (Brandt et al., 2021; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). Over the last decade there has been growing recognition of the importance of representation in children's literature (Picton, 2017), that is, children seeing themselves reflected in the books they have access to, and read. This was highlighted, for example, by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education which has undertaken important work in relation to ethnic representation and diversity. Seeing yourself and/or your own life or experiences can be empowering, and therefore books need to reflect the class community, but also introduce children to the rich and diverse society we live in – reflecting different ethnicities, family structures, socio-economic backgrounds, disabilities, etc.

Furthermore, children are more engaged when reading if the books they read, and the reading activities they participate in, align with their reading goals (i.e., why they want to read/what type of reading experience they are seeking) (McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). Children like different books for different reasons (e.g., some books are funny, comforting, exciting, help them to understand, teach them something new, etc). When children feel connected to the reading experience they are having, this improves their depth of engagement. Similarly, for non-fiction reading, connecting students' interests with books can be empowering.

In addition to relevant books, class or school-based reading activities which align with students' interests is also important. To cater to different interests, you can try providing

students with different options for reading activities, e.g., book talk, independent reading, listening to a story, etc, and allow children to select their own reading experience.

Reflection

- What are the key messages from this section for you and your colleagues?
- Reflect on how connection is currently supported within your class and school context.

Classroom activities:

Within the next section, activities are provided to support children's access to books they will connect with, and implement reading activities which are meaningful to them. We expect the core activities (in bold boxes) to be completed during the implementation of Love to Read Reception, and optional supplementary activities are available if you wish to extend your practice (in lighter boxes).

Preparation

- Looking at the core activities and delivery guidance so that you feel prepared to deliver Love to Read this week.
- Are there any 'connection' resource implications that need to be discussed with your school leadership team prior to delivery?
- Decide when in the school week you will schedule these sessions, thinking about when children will be most responsive to them.

Activity Co.1. Make reading fun for all!

- Love to Read Reception has been created for children to find a love of reading, to connect to the stories and topics explored through books, but also connect to their teacher, other teaching staff, and peers, through books and book reading activities. Connection is at the heart of Love to Read Reception, so keep this in mind with all the activities you do. Decide which activity would be best right now to support with this – seeking children's input too if you think it would be beneficial.

Activity Co.2. Ensure book provision reflects your school community

- Thinking back to the 'access' principle introduced earlier, ensure the books in your class/library reflect the lives, cultures, family structures etc of your school community. Diversity considerations include ethnicity, culture and religion, but also disability, family structure, etc. At this stage of learning to read, you don't need to discuss diversity, but ensure children's lives are reflected and celebrated in the books that you read.

Activity Co.3. Get moving to connect with the character/topic

- Reading time doesn't always need to involve only sitting – this can be difficult for some children and encouraging children to be active while they listen to a story gives them permission to do something they may be very keen to do! Choose books where children can move around as they listen, if they wish, perhaps acting out different character roles, etc.

Activity Co.4. Celebrate diversity and encourage connection across the school year

- Have reading for pleasure focus weeks. Use the school calendar to ensure cultural dates and celebrations, national days etc are represented through the books you read with your class. For example, Eid, Chinese New Year, Ramadan, Shabbat, Learning Disability week. Highlight books which reflect these different dates and celebrations. Encourage families to get involved, as they may have a lot to offer, and be keen to get take part.

Activity Co.5. Develop your knowledge of children's literature

- Develop your own knowledge of children's literature, particularly in relation to diversity to help children identify books to explore personally meaningful content. Discuss this with other teachers at school and ensure class novels throughout children's time in school reflect the rich and diverse society we live in.

Activity Co.6. Connect reading to everyday life

- Encourage children to think about all the times in their day in which they or their adult reads. Encourage them to do this activity at home with parents, older siblings or other family members and see how many different ideas they can come up with (e.g, TV guide, texting friend, reading a magazine/newspaper/book, shop signs, road signs, cooking instructions, DIY instructions).

Social

Teacher definition:

Children have the time, skills and confidence to share and discuss books with others.

Child definition:

I enjoy sharing and discussing books with others



Social

Teacher definition:

Children have the time, skills and confidence to share and discuss books with others.

Child definition:

I enjoy sharing and discussing books with others



Summary:

Children's reading experiences prior to starting school will have been primarily social – as children will have been read to, and shared books with others. However, there will be considerable variation in the amount and type of children's shared reading experiences prior to school, and therefore children will come to reception differing considerably in their knowledge of books, words and stories, and understanding of the fun and enjoyment that come with them.

In reception year, being read to, is both a social and a literacy practice, and can really help to build relationships as well as instil a love of reading among those children who have not had quality reading experiences outside of school.

There is a considerable body of research which highlights the importance of diverse quality social experiences for children's reading enjoyment (Cremin et al., 2014; Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2007). Social reading activities can take different forms and include being read to, talking about books with others (i.e., teachers, classmates, family, etc.), reading together with others, or simply expressing enjoyment about a book read (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2000; 2007).

Recent research makes a distinction between two types of shared reading engagement: active and interactive, with the former reflecting physically joining, attending to, and enjoying shared book reading and the latter reflecting asking and answering questions about the story and sharing reading experiences (Son et al., 2023). Interestingly, young children's interactive engagement, but not active engagement, has been found to be related to early literacy skills. This suggests that active engagement alone may be

insufficient to support the development of early literacy skills, however active engagement is likely to be a precursor to interactive engagement.

In addition, expanding the child's responses, describing what is happening, initiating turn taking, and using wh-questions have all been shown to promote a range of children's language skills (Fletcher, Cross, Tanney, Schneider & Finch, 2008; Noble et al., 2019; Pine, 1991; Romeo et al., 2018).

Furthermore, providing inclusive opportunities for students to share, recommend or discuss books with each other is important, as is recognising that children's needs, confidence, skills and desires to share their reading with others will vary. Giving children opportunities to share their reading in ways which are meaningful to them is therefore a priority.

Finally, it is important to consider the importance of promoting enjoyment of shared reading at home, rather than focusing on technical reading skill or 'going through the motions' (Curenton & Justice, 2008, Makin, 2006). Enjoying shared reading at home is seen as an opportunity to spend time together and develop a positive bond (Hammer et al., 2005, Swain et al., 2016, Vanobbergen et al., 2009). Often parental enjoyment of reading is underpinned by receiving positive cues from children (Kucirkova et al., 2013; Preece & Levy, 2020)

Reflection

- What are the key messages from this section for you and your colleagues?
- Reflect on how social is currently supported within your class and school context.

Classroom activities:

Within the next section, activities are provided to encourage and support children's skill, confidence and enjoyment of sharing books with others. We expect the core activities (in bold boxes) to be completed during the implementation of Love to Read Reception, and optional supplementary activities are available if you wish to extend your practice (in lighter boxes).

Preparation

- Looking at the core activities and delivery guidance so that you feel prepared to deliver Love to Read this week.
- Are there any 'social' resource implications that need to be discussed with your school leadership team prior to delivery?
- Decide when in the school week you will schedule these sessions, thinking about when children will be most responsive to them.

Activity So.1. Book buddies

- Invite older students (students from Year 3 – Year 6) to become book buddies with the reception year class. This fosters new relationships across the school, empowers older students and gives all reception year children some 1-1 or small group reading time. If your school has a library, buddies can also visit to the library together, with older students helping younger students select books. Note: there may be alternative models that work better in your school (e.g., using break-time / volunteering older students) and so please deliver in a way that works for you.

Activity So.2. Reading aloud and discussing books together

- Reading aloud in class can create a feeling of ‘togetherness’ and is an incredibly social experience. This time, share what your favourite part of the story was at the end, and encourage children to do the same with each other.

Activity So.3. Play It Out

- After you have read a book encourage children to get into small groups and play out the story – maybe coming up with new characters or an alternative ending.

Activity So.4. Contact authors

- What could be more exciting than hearing from a favourite author? Encourage children to draw pictures to their favourite author, or write a letter together to send to them. Look out for opportunities for author visits and create social reading interactions that extend beyond the school. You could also message the children’s favourite author on X to tell them which books of theirs you have been using in your classroom.

Activity So.5. Adult readers

- Involve other adults (e.g., other school staff, parents, grandparents, and people from the community) to come into reception and read a book or share a story. This may not be to a whole class – but sharing a story to small groups, which may be less daunting for the adult reader! For this activity it can be particularly exciting for the children if the adult has a role that is relevant to the story (e.g. parents who are firefighters, nurses, work with animals, etc).

Success

Teacher definition:

Children have positive reading experiences, and recognise their growing success as readers

Child definition:

I enjoy books and reading



Success

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Children have positive reading experiences, and recognise their growing success as readers.

Child definition:

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Summary:

Being a successful reader is so much more than being able to read. It reflects reading confidence, enjoyment, engagement, knowledge of reading interests, ability to self-select books, enjoyment of book-talk, and recognition of one's own development as a reader. Indeed, McGeown and Wilkinson (2020), highlight the many ways in which children can recognise their growing success as readers, for example, enjoying reading more, being able to choose a book they like, discovering new words and vocabulary, feeling more confident talking about books, etc.

The concept of 'success' is embedded in reading motivation theories, for example, expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Indeed, children's self-efficacy beliefs (i.e., perceptions of themselves as readers and/or beliefs in their own ability to learn or achieve) are considered key principles underpinning reading motivation (Conradi et al., 2014; Guthrie et al., 2007).

However it is important to recognise that children's reading skills do influence their reading enjoyment and their volitional reading, so ensuring children are developing the skills in reading is also important and these two things cannot be disconnected (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007; Toste et al., 2020, van Bergen et al., 2020). Therefore, supporting reading skill development is essential, but not all that is required to inspire and sustain a love of reading.

Given the role of skill in reading enjoyment, it is important that children have access to books for volitional reading which aligns with their reading skill (Gambrell, 2011) so that children experience success, and a sense of competence and accomplishment. Supporting

children to develop a positive sense of themselves as readers, by selecting books which reflect and develop their reading skills, is essential.

Finally, to feel successful as readers, children need to experience a sense of control; they need to feel that success is within their own control, and that they can put into place strategies, or request support from others, in order to continue to develop as readers. There is a considerable body of evidence demonstrating the positive benefits of feedback for children (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback can include praise and encouragement, but also needs to include specific formative feedback (i.e., clear and specific guidance to support children to develop as readers). Indeed, personalised practical feedback is necessary to support children to develop and recognise their growing success as readers.

Reflection

- What are the key messages from this section for you and your colleagues?
- Reflect on how success is currently supported within your class and school context.

Classroom activities:

Within the next few pages of the programme, activities are provided to increase children's positive feelings associated with reading, and feelings of reading success. We expect the core activities (in bold boxes) to be completed during the implementation of Love to Read Reception, and optional supplementary activities are available if you wish to extend your practice (in lighter boxes).

Preparation

- Looking at the core activities and delivery guidance so that you feel prepared to deliver Love to Read this week.
- Are there any 'success' resource implications that need to be discussed with your school leadership team prior to delivery?
- Decide when in the school week you will schedule these sessions, thinking about when children will be most responsive to them.

Activity Su.1. Reading Journey / reading floor book

- Create a 'reading journey' collage or floor book, with images of all the books the class have read together during Love to Read Reception. This will help children to see how much they have read together, prompt their memories of these books, and can also promote discussion (e.g., which was your favourite book and why). A picture of this can also be shared with parents, so they learn more about children's books and see the type of books their children are reading. Avoid spending a long time creating this – it only requires something simple to reflect the breadth of books read, prompt children's memories of these and prompt discussion.
- Once a book has been read, encourage children to suggest words that describe that book (e.g., funny, space, animals, me) and add these to the collage or floor book.

Activity Su.2. Make praise specific

- Praise can be given to whole classes, small groups, or individually, but no matter how praise is given, it's important that it's clear what children are being praised for (e.g., "you all listened very well, which meant everyone could hear the story"), and this is particularly important for individual feedback, which should be personalised, so that children are able to recognise their growing success as readers.

Activity Su.3. Share progress with family

- Ensure that when parents/guardians receive updates on children's reading progress it does not only focus on skills, but also on their reading interests/enjoyment and gives parents ideas to how to support this outside of school.

Activity Su.4. What is a successful reader?

- As a whole class, ask children to share ideas about what it means to be a successful reader, but without discussing reading skill (e.g., listening skills, imagination, being able to find a book they enjoy, acting out the story parts, enjoying reading, encouraging others to read to them). These different types of success can be displayed in the school classroom or corridors to highlight and remind children of the various ways to be a successful reader.

Supplementary Information

Reflecting on and evaluating practice

Love to Read Reception has been created to increase children's reading enjoyment and volitional reading. Therefore, after participating in the programme, we hope that children will have more positive beliefs about, and attitudes towards, reading, and are choosing to engage in reading activities more. An important part of developing your knowledge and skills in this area, is reflecting on and evaluating your practice. Conversations with colleagues and surveys/feedback from children can help with this.

Love to Read Reception has been developed to support children to learn new skills, strategies, and have experience of implementing these, to encourage improvements across the six principles underpinning Love to Read Reception. Specifically, we hope that:

- 1) Children will have better access to books aligned with their interests, preferences, lives, experiences and skills (access)
- 2) Children will feel more able and confident to choose books that align with their interests, skills etc (choice)
- 3) Children will choose to spend more time reading in school and at home (time)
- 4) Children will know how to choose, and will spend more time with, personally relevant books (relevant to their lives and interests) (connection)
- 5) Children will enjoy, and feel more confident, sharing and contributing to discussions with others about books (social)
- 6) Children will feel positive about their reading and recognise their growing success as readers (success)

Ultimately, we hope that Love to Read Reception will improve children's attitudes, behaviours and skills in relation to independent and shared reading.

Throughout the delivery of Love to Read Reception, you may want to get children's feedback on the activities you implement, and on any new books you purchase. This will help to inform and improve your practice in relation to your young learners.

Information for school leaders

Love to Read Reception aims to start children's journeys as interested and engaged readers, however a whole school approach is needed to ensure reading enjoyment and engagement is sustained. In terms of strategies to support a whole school approach to reading enjoyment and engagement, McGeown and Wilkinson (2021) suggest that school leaders:

- 1) Include reading for pleasure in the school strategy documents or improvement plan

- 2) Allocate regular time each week to a range of research-informed reading enjoyment activities
- 3) Form a reading leadership group within the school, to continually promote and sustain reading enjoyment and engagement practices
- 4) Allocate budget to ensure high-quality book provision aligned with students' interests, preferences, lives, experiences and abilities
- 5) Create appealing and comfortable places to read in classes and throughout the school, and encourage regular use.

In addition, building and sustaining momentum among all school staff to support reading enjoyment is important. For example, staff meetings which have opportunities for teachers to share their experiences of implementing Love to Read Reception, or time to look at new books which have been purchased for the school. Furthermore, encouraging colleagues with more experience to take a lead on this programme and/or support other colleagues to develop their professional and pedagogical knowledge and experience can be helpful.

Love to Read Reception has been created to be used within school's existing resources, however we recognise that some activities (e.g., new books) require investment. Suggestions are provided in the programme for external sources of support and fundraising ideas to support with book provision.

Introducing and establishing the Love to Read Reception programme in school is likely to be most effective when done in a planned and systematic way. It is likely to be most effective when:

- Leaders and the leadership team are actively and visibly involved in the programme.
- It is used across multiple reception classes in the school so that teachers can share their learning.
- Teachers are given time to engage in initial professional development and ongoing time and support is provided.
- The impact of the programme on students' attitudes, behaviours and skills around independent reading is monitored and evaluated over time.

School-home connections

The Love to Read Reception programme is a school-based programme, however, we would also strongly encourage you to support families and build school-home connections and a resource has been created to support with this. Parental engagement has been shown to improve children's literacy skills (Van Voorhis, Michelle, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013), and it can reduce the achievement gap (Goodall, 2017). In addition, strong school-home connections encourage parents to develop and maintain communication with their school about school activities and schoolwork and promote the development of reading habits (Castro et al.,

2015). However, promoting school-home connections must be done sensitively, as research suggests that resources intended to support parents can operate as barriers themselves if parents feel that the advice implies a negative value judgment. Understandably, engagement and ‘buy in’ from families can be low, particularly for some lower income families who may be facing several physical, psychological, and financial stressors (Lingwood, Levy, Billington, & Rowland, 2020). However, research illustrates that reading enjoyment interventions with a school-home connection can lead to sustained increases in motivation (Villiger et al., 2012); therefore, this is important and resources are also created to increase families’ enjoyment and confidence in reading with their child.

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Appendix: Love to Read Delivery Guide

Love to Read Reception: Delivery Guide

The Love to Read Reception Programme has been created to introduce and embed six research-informed principles to initiate and sustain a reading for pleasure culture in your class. To deliver the programme we would encourage you to introduce the principles/activities in this order (below, allowing some flexibility if this suits the needs/routine of your class). You should ideally read the entire programme prior to delivery, and we expect this will take approximately 1-2 hours. All activities listed below are listed as 'core' activities in the programme; supplementary activities are also available within the programme if you wish to extend the work you are doing.

Some activities listed below have only preparation time (i.e., involve independent teacher activity – e.g., organising book provision / contacting families / setting up book buddies, etc) whereas others have only delivery time (i.e., reading aloud to the class, supporting book choice, etc).

Activity	Preparation Time	Delivery Time	Notes
PRE-PROGRAMME PREPARATION			
A1: Library Audit / Co.2 Reflect / A2: Organise Books	1.5 hours		
All activities: Think about preparation/resources needed prior to each week (e.g., week 8 book buddies)	2.5 hours		
WEEK 1			
A2: Organise Books – with child input		20 mins	
Su1: Reading Journey/Floor book	None – but need to plan/update this throughout		
T2: Reading at home	Send 'Information for families' sheet home		

A3: Book to Know You		20 mins	
WEEK 2			
A4: Read aloud		3 x 20 mins	
WEEK 3			
Ch1: Optimise structure/book choice		20 mins	
Ch2: Book choice strategies		20 mins	
A4: Read aloud		20 mins	
WEEK 4			
Ch3: Scaffold reading choices		20 mins	
Ch4: Personalised suggestions	20 mins	20 mins	
A4: Read Aloud		20 mins	
WEEK 5			
T1: Regular reading		20 mins	
T2: Reading at home	20 mins		
A4: Read aloud		20 mins	
WEEK 6			

T2: Reading at home	2 x 20 mins		
A4: Read aloud		20 mins	
WEEK 7			
Co1: Fun for all		20 mins	
Co3: Get moving		2 x 20 mins	
WEEK 8			
So.1. Book Buddies	40 mins	20 mins	
WEEK 9			
So. 2. Read aloud/discuss		20 mins	
Su 1. Reading Journey	20 mins	20 mins	
WEEK 10			
Su 2. Make praise specific		20 mins	
Su 3. Share progress with family	20 mins		
Su 4: What makes a successful reader		20 mins	

