Supporting parents & carers with reading

A resource for professionals supporting parents or carers to gain confidence with reading

Developed as part of The National Year of Reading 2026 - a UK-wide campaign designed to help more people rediscover the joy of reading.

The National Literacy Trust has created this resource to support professionals working with families. It includes top tips, useful links, resources and further reading to support parents and carers to gain confidence with reading.

Tips to support reading together at home

You can support parents and carers to build their confidence at home:

- **Start with existing hobbies and interests:** many people read more in day-to-day life than they realise, including subtitles, recipes, instructions, song lyrics, social media. Celebrate the reading they already do and help them follow their interests into further reading.
- **Listening is an accessible way into books and stories:** podcasts can be a great way to access stories. Also, library services offer free access to digital audiobooks: Find your local library service here.
- **Pictures tell a thousand words:** graphic novels or other illustrated books can support understanding, provide lots to talk about and feel less overwhelming than books that rely solely on text.
- **Reading as a family:** encouraging less confident readers to practise by reading children's books with their children can be a great incentive for learning and an accessible resource for learning new words. Looking at books and talking about the pictures or making up stories with babies or young children is a great way to support them to begin to enjoy books and reading too.
- **Bedtime stories:** listening to audiobooks together can also be a good way for parents or carers with lower literacy to create a bedtime story moment with a child. Or try showing them how to make up a story together inspired by the pictures in a book, household items or just from their imagination.
- **Stories can bring people together:** you could encourage parents to share stories or favourite books from childhood - include songs, recipes and memories too.

Free resources for supporting reading for pleasure

Please check resources are appropriate for the parents and carers you work with before signposting.

- **Chat, play, read booklet** for parents with children under 3. Simple at home activities to support early language, available in 19 languages, with voiceovers: Chat, play, read booklets | National Literacy Trust
- **Share stories with me booklet** for parents of children 0-5 years, also available in Welsh. Simple suggestions of how to support young children to begin to enjoy books, stories and storytelling: Share Stories With Me booklet | Words for Life
- **Free audiobooks, newspapers and magazines:** available through your local library via BorrowBox or Libby apps.
- **Poetry By Heart:** explore a range of poems for different ages and find videos of the poems being performed aloud: Poetry By Heart | 14+ Timeline
- **Easy Read (Mencap):** information booklets on a range of topics written in simpler language, with short sentences and images. Designed for people with learning disabilities but may be useful for people with lower literacy levels: Easy Read library | Mencap
- **The Reader:** supports a network of shared reading groups, where people connect and share experiences using stories and poems. There is no pressure to talk or read aloud: Shared Reading - The Reader
- **Adaptations:** some readers might benefit from tools which aid reading such as coloured overlays (or eBooks where the background colour can be changed). The British Dyslexia Association may be able to offer advice (see below), and some library services have resources to try out or borrow.

Publishers

- **Gatehouse:** Gatehouse Books | The Adult Literacy Specialist
- **Macmillan graded readers** are a series of reading books at all levels from beginner to advanced. Suitable for young and adult ESOL/EAL learners: Macmillan graded readers
- **Oxford University Press graded readers** include titles at all levels for adults, teenagers and young learners: OUP graded readers catalogue

The Reading Agency

The Reading Agency publishes '**Quick Reads**', short, accessible and easy to read books that prioritise great story telling and adult-focused content, written by some of the most popular authors in the UK.

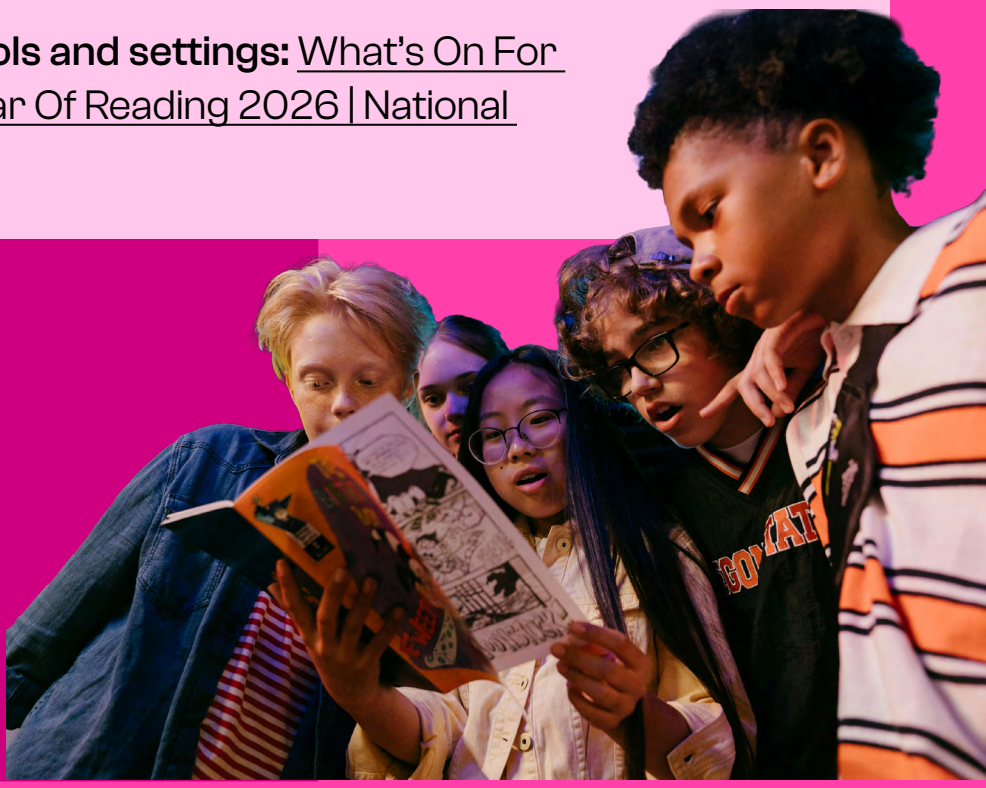
Reading Ahead is an inclusive reading challenge for adults, also run by the Reading Agency, which engages participants in the joy of reading, which in turn helps them to improve their language and literacy skills.

Support & guidance

Please check resources are appropriate for the parents and carers you work with before signposting.

- Visit the **Gov.uk site for improving English skills** or call the National Careers Service helpline on 0800 100 900.
- If an adult is employed and has access to a union, their union learning representative will be able to provide confidential advice. Information is available on the **Union Learn website**.
- Adults looking for literacy support can contact a local adult education college directly to find information on courses in their area. **Local libraries** also provide support to find appropriate reading materials and reading groups.
- Parents who would like guidance and resources to be able to support their children on their literacy journey can visit the National Literacy Trust's family facing **Words for Life website**.
- **Read Easy** recruits, trains and supports volunteers to give one-to-one tuition to adults who struggle with reading.
- **The Learning and Work Institute** aims to improve access to learning for adults.
- **The Reading Agency** provides a number of free resources to help improve adult reading skills.
- **Learn Direct** provides online courses and a network of learning centres. Call 0800 101 901 for advice and information on their adult literacy courses.
- The **British Dyslexia Association Helpline** is a national service for people with dyslexia and dyscalculia and those who support them. It offers free and confidential information, support and signposting: 0333 405 4567
- **National Literacy Trust** runs adult literacy projects in criminal justice spaces and targeted community projects reaching people who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence.
- **Shannon Trust** supports people who can read and understand numbers to teach those who can't, in prisons and communities.
- For **EAL/ESOL families**, see this **dedicated information resource**.

- **Find out more:** National Year of Reading 2026 | Go All In
- **Pledge your support:** Pledge your support | National Year of Reading 2026
- **Share your events:** What's on | Events Calendar | National Year of Reading 2026
- **Resources for schools and settings:** What's On For Schools | National Year Of Reading 2026 | National Literacy Trust



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