

Helping with English

English is probably the most important subject that your child studies at school. Without English, your child couldn't communicate with other English speakers. He would be shut off from education and other people in this country.



It has been established that a person with a large vocabulary has a greater ability to think. This is because words are like bricks - having a large 'pile' in your head makes it easier for you to 'build' ideas.

So, how can you help to improve your child's English, whether it is a first or additional language? There's plenty to can do, even if you don't see yourself as an expert.

How to help your child

None of these suggestions are expensive or complicated. Each one needs just a little thought and time from you. One or two of these activities a week will really help a child get better at English, in a very undemanding way.

- Make sure that you read often with your child. As your child learns, he will want to read often to you, too. Make a regular commitment to visit your local library. Take out a book for yourself as well as allowing your child to choose, to show that it's 'cool' for grown-ups to read too.
- Limit TV. At the start of each week, read the TV guide with your child and get him to note down all the things he wants to watch that week in a diary or on a pin-board. He could write a mini review of a favourite programme, complete with stick-on stars, afterwards.
- Get your child to design and write greetings cards for family and friends. Perhaps he could even make up a rhyme to go in the middle.
- On car journeys, take note of car registration plates. See if everyone can make up a phrase using the letters in the order they are shown. So, T401 SPF could be, 'Trains Speeding Past Fields.'

- Play Word Associations. One person starts by saying a word at random. The next person says a word he associates with the first one, and so on. So, you could have: 'Snow - cold - warm - holiday - beach - swim - fish - chips', etc. Try to get some pace into the game!
- The [BBC Schools](#) website also has lots of entertaining and educational ideas.