

West Sussex Libraries

How the library can support your child now they've started school

It's free to join the library and you can sign up for a library card in person or join online on our website: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/libraries/join-the-library/>. With a library card you can borrow up to twenty books for three weeks at a time, reserve children's books for free, and renew books you have on loan, as long as no one else is waiting for them. There are no overdue charges for children's books that are returned late to the library.

Stories to Share

Once your child starts school, they'll begin learning to read for themselves, but it's still important to continue sharing books and stories together at home. The best way to instil a love for and interest in reading is to simply read with your child. Your local library has a great selection of picture books you can share at home, from old favourites to the latest new releases. We also have dual language picture books for families with English as a second language and giant print and braille picture books for children or parents with visual impairment. You might also like to watch some of our online Storytimes that you can find on our website: <https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/web/arena/currentoffer/rhyme-time-and-story-time>.

Rhymes and Rhyme Times

Did you know that children who know eight nursery rhymes by the time they're four years old, are usually among the best readers by the time they're eight? Nursery rhymes are a great way for children to develop the early phonic skills (the ability to hear, identify and manipulate letter sounds) that are essential for learning to read. To support your child's early literacy skills, why not sing rhymes from our Time to Rhyme booklet together or join in with our regular online Rhyme Times that you can find on our website or our West Sussex Libraries Family Corner Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WestSussexLibraries/>.

Learning to Read

Every library has a collection of Beginner Reads to support children who are learning to read. The collection covers each of the early reading stages and our library staff can help you find books to match your child's reading level. The more opportunities your child has to practice reading, the more they'll grow in confidence and progress to become a fluent independent reader. Research studies have shown that spending just 10 minutes a day reading can make a huge difference to the development of a child's reading skills. We also have lots of help and advice for parents and carers with children learning to read on our website: <https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/web/arena/helpingchildrentoread>.

Top Tips for Helping Your Child Learn to Read

Reading is one of the most important skills that children will ever learn. It is the key to success in all areas of their education. You can help your child learn to read in many ways:

- ✓ Read aloud to your child as often as possible and share a wide range of reading materials, for example stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poetry.
- ✓ Read with your child when you both want to read. You may find bedtime is the perfect time to read together. This can help create a routine and can make going to bed something your child looks forward to.
- ✓ Find somewhere quiet and comfortable, sitting side by side so that you will both be able to see the book.
- ✓ Before you begin reading, talk about the book; look at the front cover, title, and illustrations. Encourage your child to predict what the book will be about.
- ✓ Give your child plenty of time to browse and talk about the illustrations – these are valuable for their understanding of the story and as a prop to help them read and remember the book.
- ✓ As you read aloud move your fingers under the words as you read to show the connection between what you are saying and the text on the page, and that sentences are read from left to right.
- ✓ Don't forget to have fun reading the book aloud. If you feel comfortable try putting on character voices or making animal noises and show emotion to help bring the story to life and make your child giggle.
- ✓ Don't worry if your child wants to read the same book over and over again. Familiar books are comforting and build confidence. Repetitive reading of the same story book also helps with their phonetic awareness.
- ✓ Be a reading role model! It doesn't matter what it is – you could pick up a newspaper, a cookery book, or a novel. The more your children see you and other members of your family reading, the keener they'll be to read too.

Libraries for Learning

Our libraries offer early information and children's non-fiction books to help with homework and support learning at home. We also have free online information resources. Our online resources for children include the junior edition of Britannica Library, an online encyclopaedia resource with safe, fact-checked, age-appropriate content that's freely accessible from our website for library members:

<https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/web/arena/currentoffer/childrens-learning>.

Stories to Support New Experiences and Challenging Situations

To help young children deal positively with new experiences, such as starting school, worries and emotions, or more difficult situations such as divorce or bereavement we have put together situation specific booklists of recommended stories designed to comfort and reassure. These booklists can be found on our website: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/libraries/more-library-services/library-services-for-children-and-young-people/library-booklists-to-support-children/>.

Get in Touch:

We have a team of librarians with specialist knowledge to help with enquiries about children's books and reading. If you have an enquiry contact your local library, who will refer your question to your local Families and Wellbeing Librarian, or you can complete our online enquiry form to get in touch:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/libraries/ask-a-librarian/>.