



THE BRAKENHALE SCHOOL

High Expectations and Challenge for All

Literacy Advice for parents

Ways to support your child
and help them succeed.

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What is 'literacy'?

The term 'literacy' refers to the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing.

All these skills are interlinked, so the more you practise speaking and listening, the better reader you become. The more you read, the better a writer you become. It all helps develop a wider vocabulary and awareness of the use of language and tone for different situations.



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Literacy skills are essential life skills and this guide is designed to offer some practical and fun suggestions for ways in which you can help your child to develop them.

Some of them may be things you already do; others may be ideas that other parents have found successful.



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Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening is the foundation for both reading and writing.

It is important that you devote some time each day to talk to you child about the things you've both been doing.





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S&L: Everyday Activities

You can help your child by modelling the use of language, engaging them in discussion, letting them see you read: whether it be books; magazines, or online news/Twitter, etc.

Share opinions and make time for talking about what you have read or done.





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S&L: Everyday Activities

Watching the news, or Newsround which is aimed at young people, with your child once or twice a week and discussing the reports and events will help develop a child's speaking and listening skills.





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Maps

Going on a long journey? Encourage your child to look at the map with you and discuss the possible routes you could take. Which would be quickest? Which would be the most scenic? Why?





Car Number Plates

On a car journey, make up short sentences using words that begin with letters from car number plates that you see.

Example: EN79 AAG would give you the letters E N A A G, which could become Even Numbers Are Always Grouchy.





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Photographs

When on holiday, day trips or at special events, encourage your child to take some of the photographs as well as you.

Later on, look through them together and discuss what is happening; why you took them, and whether you like them or not.





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Ways to Promote Reading

Whatever your child reads, it will help develop their vocabulary and literacy skills. So create a reading culture.





Ways to Promote Reading

- Lead by example: let your child see you reading.
- Try to make a range of reading material available – books, newspapers and magazines. This is vital for GCSE English.
- Show an interest – ask what they are reading, ‘What happened..? What did you like about ..? What do you think will happen ..?’
- Engage your child in conversation about books and magazine/news articles; encourage them to speculate about what will happen in a book.
- Make sure your child is interested in whatever they are reading. If the vocabulary is too hard they will give up; if it’s too easy they may not find it rewarding.
- Ask about the characters in the story and what they like or dislike about them.
- Cook or bake from a recipe.
- Suggest book tokens or books to relatives as suitable gifts.
- Look out for films and TV programmes related to children’s books, and encourage them to read the book.
- Encourage your child to use the school and local library.



Writing

- Ask to see their exercise books and discuss what they are writing about. (Book Look)
- Reading their work aloud can help a child ensure it makes sense.
- Help your child check their work for full stops, capital letters and paragraphs.
- Make sure your child has a dictionary and thesaurus and encourage them to use it when writing.
- Show your child examples of written documents (e.g. letters and newspapers) and draw attention to the different layout conventions (again, vital for GCSE English). Emails to friends and family, holiday postcards etc. help practise informal writing
- Shopping lists – ask your child to write down your shopping list for you or write one of their own for a recipe or party.



Strategies for learning spellings

- Many young people become very frustrated and sensitive about their spelling, but with a 'little and often' approach and plenty of praise it will improve. Only aim to learn about 5 words per week.
- Focus on the words that have been corrected in your child's books and make sure they have the correct spelling written down.
- Use the 'look, cover, write and check' method to practise spellings.
- Show how words can be broken up
 - temp-er- at – ure.
- Think of ways to remember common mistakes
 - separate has 'a rat' in it.
- Leading by example is again effective – let your child see you using a dictionary to check your spellings and encourage them to do the same.



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Make it a game!

For reading, writing, spelling, speaking and listening, games can provide great opportunities to learn and grow. And they're fun!

- Many board games require interaction with other players, especially team games. Some particularly good examples are: Guess Who, Cluedo, Cranium, Taboo, Articulate and Who's in the Bag?
- Boggle – a game for the whole family to see who can make the most words from the letters shown.
- Hangman, word searches and crosswords are a good way to extend vocabulary and practise spellings.





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Thank you for listening

I look forward to supporting your son or daughter through the rest of their time here at Brakenhale.

If you have any questions at any time, please email me at:

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