Parents as Partners in Learning

Thank you!
• Sharing learning with children in your child’s class is an exciting opportunity to experience what goes on within the classroom and to support learning. Thus it is important this experience is as positive and constructive as possible.
We appreciate your flexibility and understanding that sometimes you may be asked to support other children or children from another class.
You will find that the children will be at a variety of abilities and levels and it is an expectation that you respect confidentiality. We place our trust in you as a parent and a classroom helper.
Teachers work to an assessment schedule and it is important that we trust their professional judgment with regards to reading materials and levels the children have been allocated.
Try to use positive language and try to focus on positive outcomes at all times:

“How could you be more co-operative?”

“You were very helpful in packing away the equipment quickly and tidily, thank you.”

“Please use consideration and speak quietly.”
It is not your role to discipline a child in any way. If a situation does arise and you feel uncomfortable or unsure, speak to the teacher immediately, so that they can assist.
We know you will understand that your session in the class is part of the busy day for the class and the teacher. Please do make a separate appointment if there is anything you would like to see the teacher about with regards to your own child.
We know that you will understand that it is not appropriate to bring younger siblings.
Teachers will soon be sending schedules out to their class parents and carers outlining the help they are seeking and days and times. These times are generally fixed and will only be altered if there is a school event, excursion etc, in which case parent helpers will be informed.
Every teacher has their own individual way of operating their classroom and by now the teachers have a clear indication of the children’s needs. It is up to each teacher as to the type of help and frequency they may require.
Parents Helping With Reading

• Setting the scene – ‘Getting to know each other’ – ‘Hi _____, my name is Debbie/Mrs Jones, I’m Sally’s mum/nan and we are going to read together (if you sense uncertainty) or I am going to listen to your great reading

• POSITIVE – any little bit of positivity use it and build on it, eg. ‘You are sitting in your chair beautifully, ready to read, thank you _,’(rather than I like the way you are sitting)
Early Reading Behaviours

• Identifying the front and back of a book
• Where to start reading
• Which way to go – directional movement L to R (this is as serious as driving on the correct side of the road)
• Return sweep
• Word by word matching
Starting a book

• Discuss the cover – talking is important (‘Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.’)

• Ask the child have they read this book before
  - If so, can they tell you something about the book BRIEFLY
  - If they have not read the book before, have a quick look through it, tell them the characters, eg Jack and Billy. Identify particular things, eg bird/dove, rabbit/bunny
  - Ladybeetle/ladybug in early reading – let it go by – the meaning is not lost
• You could accompany the child’s pointing with you pointing on top of the word and fail to move on when s/he makes an error that you think s/he could self correct (SC)

• If the child reads too fast and is not using his eyes, frame each word (using two fingers)
Beyond Early Reading

• Reading needs to sound smooth like a story, like you’re talking.

• To develop fluency, phrasing and confidence the text needs to be easy, otherwise it is just too hard and interest is loss – ‘I don’t like reading, I don’t want to read.’

• (Rhythmic repetition or repeated chorus bits are excellent for developing fluency, eg ‘The Grand Old Duke of York,’ ‘Oh, lovely mud,’ said the cow. ‘Oh, lovely mud,’ said the duck)
• When a child is matching the words as h/she reads and is reading the words correctly, it may be time for them to: ‘Read with your eyes’ – you can read the words like a story

• There will be times when the child will naturally bring back the pointed finger – to make meaning, for checking purposes

• If the child looks at you, (appealing), wanting you to tell them the word, we naturally want to tell them and sometimes we will, to avoid losing meaning (allow 3 second pause initially)
• Sometimes it is ok, to say to the child, ‘Go back, have another go/try again and think about what word might fit there.’

- If a child is appealing quite a lot, the text is most likely too difficult – you read the rest of the text

• If a child is not in the mood to read, read to them – they’ll most likely want you to read to them again – point to the text if need be, include a quick comment along the way, for eg, ‘Oh, that looks like our dog Rover, always digging in the garden.’
• If a child reads a word incorrectly and they should know it, wait until the end of the book or end of the page, ‘You said ..... was that right? (They have to check, they have to think does that make sense?, does that sound right?, does that word look right?)
• By informing a child to listen to what they said, instead of telling them the correct word, is making them more accountable and making them take control and being responsible for their reading. This enables them to take more notice of their reading – giving them a strategy that can be used again for ‘next time.’
If a child stops reading within a sentence, (pauses), it is usually a good idea to let them know that they have stopped for a reason. ‘Maybe something doesn’t make sense or sound right or look right? How about you go back and check what you have read so far because you are in control, you are the reader – your allowed to do this.’
High Frequency Words
(Sight Words)

• If you are asked in class to check high frequency words, usually a check list, the words need to be quickly identified, (within 2-3 seconds)

• Early reading books contain heaps of high frequency words – at home with the reader – ‘Can you find the word ‘to?’ -(don’t overdo this)

• High frequency words will also be covered at school, in big books, guided reading and within storywriting
Guided Reading Groups

• Allow teachers to work with small groups of students, catering for their identified learning need

• You may be asked to monitor one of the other groups – you may even have a reading group yourself – the classroom teacher will indicate what you will be required to perform
• Classroom helpers can be valuable in assisting with children’s learning
• Your child will love seeing you help in their classroom
• You can meet your child’s peers
• Please do not feel offended if the task you have done is complete and you say to the teacher that you can stay for longer and the teacher says, ‘Thank you, but no.’ The curriculum is jammed packed, there are times when the teacher wants to have his/her class to themselves
• Explain to your child that you will be coming into the classroom to help with ______, then you will leave and you will see your child after school. If your child has issues relating to you leaving, maybe helping in the classroom at a later date may be wise. (They will see other parents come and go with classroom helping and understand the routine involved – Sally’s mum helped with reading then she went home).
The staff appreciate your time and effort in volunteering to assist with the students learning at St Mary’s. You are a valuable school team member.