As parents, we all want the best for our children. We’re probably all aware that it’s important to make sure they are confident, fluent readers who enjoy reading, but often it’s hard to know where to start.

Research indicates that reading for 20 minutes per day exposes children to 1.8 million words a year! Reading improves all of a child’s literacy skills and can offer them a lifetime of enjoyment and learning. At Cuddington we aim to promote a love of reading and feel that children discovering books and how to use and enjoy them is crucial to their development.

It’s never too early to begin enjoying books together, it’s great for bonding and building a strong and loving relationship with your child. Sharing a book with a child is fun – it’s a time for closeness, laughing and talking together.

Top tips:

Set aside some quiet time, away from noise, TV and mobile phones.

Cuddle up together or get brothers and sisters to join in too.

Look at the pictures and start talking about them.

Ask questions when you’re reading together such as: ‘What can you see on this page?’ ‘How do you think the characters feel?’ Give your child plenty of time to respond.

Ask your child to tell the story. They can ‘read’ the pictures to you and talk about what’s happening on the page.

Reading aloud:

It is important that children, particularly in the Early Years and KS1 are given the opportunity to read aloud to an adult as often as possible, to improve their decoding and listening skills. Help your child to segment and blend any unfamiliar words. If they are still unsure, tell them the word and explain what it means. Then read the sentence again together. Remember to use lots of praise and tell them why they have done well i.e. “I really enjoyed listening to that sentence because you made it sound so exciting!”

Reading with older children: Older children may feel that they enjoy reading on their own more and prefer to read in their head instead of aloud to an adult. This is usually evidence that they are enjoying the reading experience and are skilled and independent enough to read alone. The focus for a parent at this point should be more on discussion of comprehension. If a child decodes fluently, but does not fully understand the story or text, then they will struggle to enjoy or appreciate books. It is therefore essential that children have the opportunity to discuss what they are reading.

Above all, make reading fun! Children of all ages love being read to by adults, particularly if you can do the voices! Showing children that you enjoy reading and fostering an environment where sharing reading experiences and opinions about books is valued will have such a positive impact.