Family fact sheet: Making the most of story time

Reading books together is one of the best ways to build language and literacy skills. It teaches grammar and how to use words to tell stories and share ideas. It also introduces new concepts.

Once you've read the book, you can then talk about it. Ask your child questions and encourage them to share their thoughts.

Ask a question

Use the **CROWD** prompt to help you think of different types of questions.

C*ompletion* – Ask your child to finish a phrase or sentence from the story.
Example: The cow jumped over the... (moon).

R*ecall* – Ask a question about the characters or what happened in the story.
Example: What did the character do first?

O*pen-ended questions* – Ask a question that needs more than a yes or no answer.
Example: What's happening in this picture?

W*h questions* – Ask a question that starts with what, where, when, why or how. You can point to the picture as a prompt.
Example: Why do you think they did that?

D*istancing* – Ask a question that links the story to your child's own life.
Example: They're going to play a game. What games do you like?

Types of questions

The type of question you ask will depend on your child and their development. You might use a mix of both.

Simple questions will prompt shorter answers. Your child can usually work out the answer from the book.

Example: What is this? Who is that? What's happening here?

More difficult questions will prompt longer answers. Your child may need to use their imagination or explain their thinking to answer. These types of questions help build their brain and communication skills.

Example: How do you think this character feels? What would happen if...?

If your child can't answer the question, point out clues in the book to help them. You can also balance questions with your own thoughts, like:

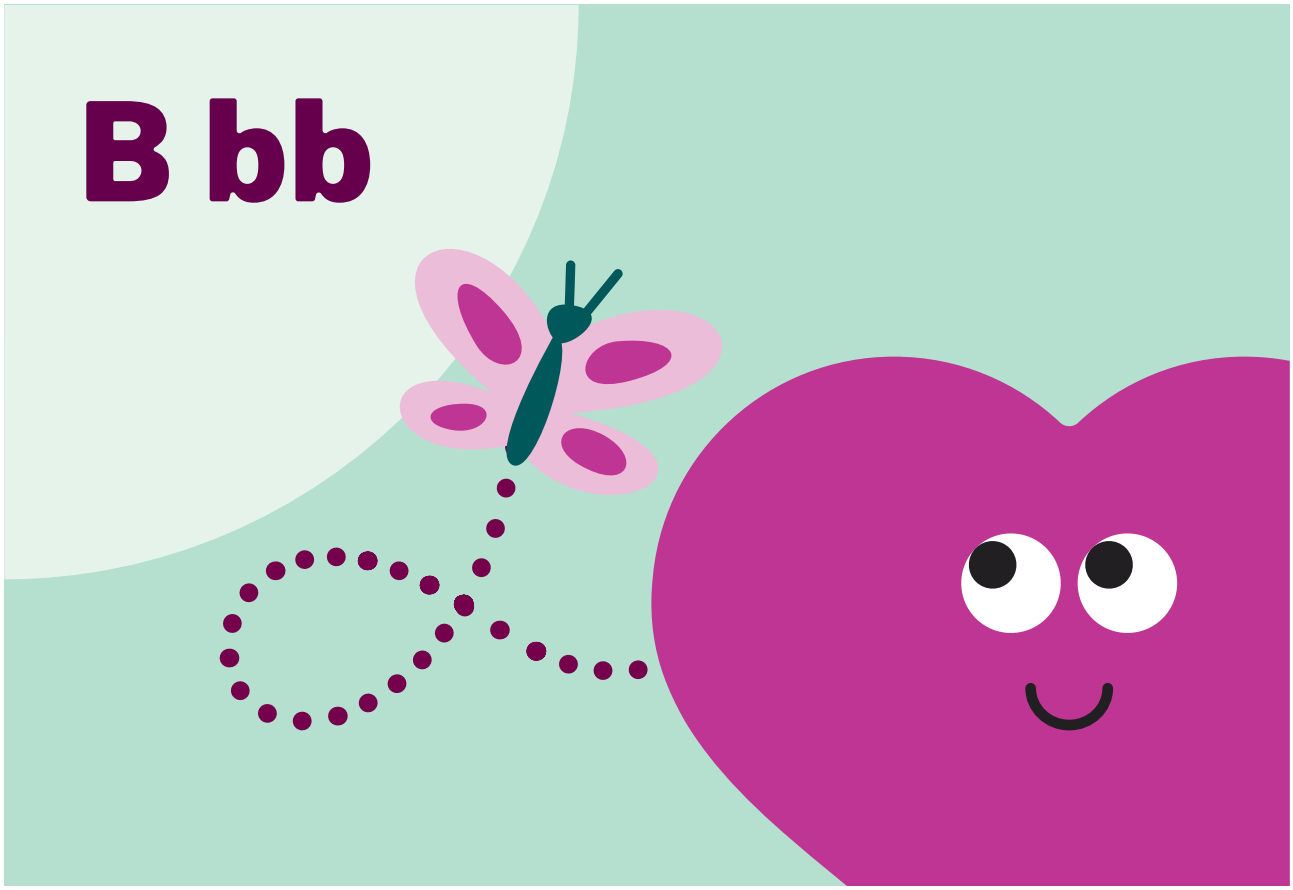
- sharing what you found interesting about the story.
- linking the story to an experience you had with your child.

Practise language skills

Reading a book with your child is a great chance to learn other language skills.

Introduce new words. Ask your child to guess the meaning of a word they don't know. Praise their efforts and explain what the word means if they don't get it right.

Emphasise rhyming words and word sounds. Ask your child which words rhyme or start with the same letter. Point to the words as you say them.

Example: Jingle, jangle and jungle all start with the same sound. Do you know which sound they start with?

Explore words, pictures and parts of the book. Ask your child if they can name any letters or count the number of words in the book. Talk about the parts of the book such as the front cover, back cover, title and author.