

## Barrington Stoke Tips for helping reluctant readers

1

Parents and carers play a vital role, as their attitude is often the strongest influence on a child. Enthusiasm is catching so never imply reading is a chore.

2

Read aloud to your child as often as you can. This is important because it introduces him to a much wider and more literary vocabulary than the limited number of words used in everyday speech.

3

Find out which authors your child likes, then read several of their books with him. It's easier to guess what's coming next if the style is a familiar one.

4

Tape yourself as you read a book to your child. You can create a bank of stories for those times when you are unable to read to him yourself. Borrow audio books from the library.

5

Visit libraries and bookshops with your child. Teach him to check with the librarian or bookseller on where to find the sort of books he enjoys.

6

Set aside a time for reading each day when you can be alone and undisturbed with your child. If you are distracted, he will be even more so.

7

Read in new places: in the bath, in a den behind the sofa or up a tree!

8

When your child starts to read independently, you're still needed. Most reluctant readers like a companion when they're reading to themselves. So why not sit beside him and read your own book?

## What sort of books will get my child hooked?

### First impressions

The books should look attractive and individual but not too different. The covers should be stylish and in no way indicate that they are aimed at less able readers.

### Gripping stories

Don't go for books, that are technically easy to read, but whose stories are babyish and dull. Barrington Stoke only chooses authors who know how to write an exciting story and grab the child's attention from the first page.

### Language

Watch out for oddly spelt, unusual or difficult words. If there are too many it will slow up the reading process. For example, 'fast' is easier than 'quickly', 'wizard' than 'magician' and 'most of the time' than 'usually'. Words like 'neighbour', 'unique', 'echo', and 'anxious' will be real stumbling blocks. Beware also of vocabulary that is dumbed down or over-simplified.

### Style – keep it simple!

Look for a simple and direct style. There should be nothing to hold up the flow of the story. Barrington Stoke avoids long, complicated sentence structures full of sub-clauses. For example: 'Feeling lonely, he sat there miserably, under the tree, in the rain, until it got dark.'

### Keep it short!

Children will get such a confidence boost if they can get to the end of a book.

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## The Barrington Stoke Range

SERIES	READING AGE	INTEREST AGE	ILLUSTRATIONS
<b>Go! NEW</b>	6	11+	Yes
<b>Solo</b>	6.5	10 - 14	Yes
<b>4u2read</b>	7	9 - 12	Yes
<b>gr8reads 12+</b>	7	12+	Yes
<b>Plays NEW</b>	7	12+	No
<b>Novels 9 - 12</b>	8	9 - 12	Yes
<b>Reloaded</b> (myths and retellings)	8	10 - 14	Yes
<b>FYI</b> (fiction with facts)	8	10 - 14	Yes
<b>Reality Check</b> (true stories)	8	10 - 14	Yes
<b>Novels 12+</b>	8	12+	No
<b>Graphic Novels</b>	8	12+	Yes
<b>Most Wanted</b>	8	18+	No

**Barrington  
Stoke**

The market leader for reluctant readers

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## Won't Read or Can't Read?

### Why your child is reluctant to read and what you can do about it

Tips and advice for parents and carers of 8-12s



For more information on dyslexia and useful links go to our website at [www.barringtonstoke.co.uk](http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk)

Love **reading** 4kids.co.uk

**Barrington  
Stoke**  
The market leader for reluctant readers

## Why doesn't my child read?

There are plenty of good reasons why a child fails to learn to read and none of them are his fault. They are not your fault either. First find out what the problem is. Then you can take action to get things moving. Don't expect a miracle cure. Look for slow but steady progress, which will gradually build up your child's confidence.

**Does your child think reading is uncool and that TV, computer games and football are more fun? Does he like to stick to things he's good at? Does he reject books because he thinks they are not for him?** ?

A lot of children have a short concentration span and want things instantly. Find books that are short, exciting and satisfying and that match the interests of your child.

**Has your child's schooling been disrupted through illness or frequent moves or constant changes of teacher?** ?

If he is vulnerable, each setback will put him further behind. It is important to discuss the gaps with the teacher and plan for plugging them.

Read to your child on a regular basis, sharing the enjoyment of a good story. The vocabulary of books is far more extensive than spoken English, so introduce him to a few new words every time.

*"I have noticed such a change in him ...and it's all thanks to your books."* Parent

## Patience Thomson explores the issues and offers advice and solutions...

*"Thank you – you have helped to turn a reluctant reader into a voracious one."* Parent

**Have there been traumatic incidents in his life that have affected him? He may be "emotionally unavailable for work" and unable to concentrate because his mind is constantly on other things.** ?

Books can play an important role in helping a child, either as a form of escape, or as a way of looking at relevant issues in a different way. Through identifying with the fictional characters the reader realises his problems are not unique and may even work out some similar solutions for himself.

**Could your child be dyslexic? This is surprisingly common and is often inherited. These children are no less bright than their peers, but they find it hard to learn to read by conventional methods and need a different approach.** ?

Discuss your concerns with your child's teacher. You may be able to get a full assessment through the school. Or you can pay for one privately. For more advice and information try:

- [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)
- [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)
- [www.arkellcentre.org.uk](http://www.arkellcentre.org.uk)
- [www.dyslexia-parent.com](http://www.dyslexia-parent.com)
- [www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

**Does your child have problems with his eyesight? Does he tire quickly when he's reading? Does he skip words and lines, repeat himself and lose his place? Does black print on white paper hurt his eyes? Problems like these can really affect your child's ability to read comfortably.** ?

Cream or off-white paper is more restful on the eye. Lines of text of differing lengths make it easier for a child to keep his place. The size of the print, not too large or too small, and proper spacing between the letters, words, lines and paragraphs is important to prevent words and letters "jumping around".

**Does your child find it difficult to concentrate or settle? Hyperactivity is common these days and extreme cases will need to be referred to a specialist doctor. The child's inability to concentrate will affect many areas of his life including reading and most school-work.** ?

It is vital that stories are well-written and gripping with lots of cliff-hangers and unexpected twists. Short stories can be more rewarding for hyperactive readers, who will gain confidence from finishing a book.

**Is English your child's second language? It is easier to learn to speak a second language than to read and write it.** ?

Simple sentence structure and plenty of conversation support readers who are less familiar with the English language and help them pick up current English usage.

**Does your child say, "Books are boring", "Books are not my thing"?** ?

Reading fluency is a vital skill. It is hard to survive at school without it. So any pleasurable way of improving a child's reading ability is a bonus. And fiction is important because it feeds the imagination and introduces children to a wide range of experience that would otherwise be beyond their reach.

**How can I tell if a book is too hard?** ?

Encourage your child to test a page of any book before choosing it. Let your child put a finger on each word he cannot read. If more than five fingers are used on any one page, he will not be able to read it without help.

It is obvious when a child is falling behind with his reading. He himself will be aware of his problems and of his parents' growing anxiety. But lots can be done to help at home. Reading difficulties may be a challenge, but they are not a disaster!

Good luck!

**Patience Thomson, co-founder Barrington Stoke and former Head Teacher.**

*"Since being introduced to your range of books he is reading with enjoyment for the first time in his life."* Parent