



Launchpad Cards

Use with any book



1. Pick a Launchpad Card to focus on today.



2. Watch the matching video on the Language Launchpad YouTube channel.



Launchpad Card
Use with any book

Find a special place, which is comfortable and free from distractions



When?

Before reading.

Why is it important?

Children have the **best learning opportunities** when they are able to pay **attention** to the story and activities.

It's important that you **respond** to your child's communication, so you will need to give them your full attention.

How do I include it?

Plan your reading time in advance.

Pick a time when your child will be calm, alert and focused.

Pick a space where you can both **share** the book.

Avoid any interruptions: no phone, no TV, no dummy (if they have one). A teddy or comforter is fine. You might be able to include it in the story!

If your child has vision or hearing difficulties, make sure they have everything they need (e.g. hearing aids and glasses), and that you are positioned in the best way for them to be able to see and hear you and the book.



Watch the 'Find a special place' video



Launchpad Card
Use with any book

Introduce story time clearly



When?

Before reading.

Why is it important?

Help your child to **understand** this new or changed part of your routine, so they know what will happen.

How do I include it?

Explain that this is a **special time** to read a story together.

Make sure you use an **interested** and **excited** voice to help your child know it will be fun!



Watch the 'Introduce story time' video



Launchpad Card
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Let them know that this time is special and enjoyable for you too



When?

Before reading.

Why is it important?

It's important for your child's developing **self-esteem** to know that you **enjoy** special time with them.

How do I include it?

"I love reading time with you, it's really fun".

"I'm looking forward to more reading time tomorrow".



Watch the 'Let them know it's special time for you too' video



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Get them involved



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

Children **engage** and learn more when they can **join in** with the story.

It's important that children are **active participants** in story time. This makes it more fun and meaningful.

How do I include it?

Show your child how they can take part.

You can:

- **Point** (e.g. to the pictures or things you can touch/lift).
- **Pause often** and let them know you're giving them time to join in.
- Make **sounds**.
- **Act** out what is happening in the story together.
- **Ask questions**.
- **Start sentences** and then pause to allow your child to finish them.
- Let them **hold the book** and **turn the pages**.
- Say things like: "You try", "Your turn", "What's that?", "It's a ___", "Frog says ___"

Don't forget: always respond positively. This gives them the confidence to join in.



Watch the '**Get them involved**' video



Launchpad Card
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Give them the control



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

This helps children to be **engaged** and to keep their attention.

It also gives them a chance to **control** how fast or slow the story goes, helping them to take in information at their speed.

How do I include it?

Think of your child as the leader and the storyteller.

Encourage your **child** to:

- **Hold** the book.
- **Turn** the pages.
- Be the **story teller**.
- Go back and repeat a page if they want to.



Watch the 'Give them the control' video



Launchpad Card
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Pause often



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

Pausing creates a **chance** for your child **to participate**, so that you can **both join in** with story time.

Pause so that they can **process information**, **say something**, **look** at something or **point** at something.

How do I include it?

Stop speaking (e.g. at the end of a page) and wait. Keep waiting (they often need a little longer than you think).

Look at your child to show you are giving them a chance to communicate.

If they don't have anything to say, **don't worry**, but **don't give up on your pausing**. You could follow their gaze, and talk about it (e.g. "you're looking at the monkey!").

Don't forget: always respond positively. This gives them the confidence to join in again next time.



Watch the 'Pause often' video



Launchpad Card
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Respond positively to what your child says and does



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

Children **love** to know you're **listening to them**, and that their comments matter to you.

Responding positively helps children to **feel confident**, and to **keep communicating**.

The cycle of *"You speak, I respond"* in story time is good practise for conversations.

How do I include it?

Think of them as the leader of the conversation, not you.

If they point something out or say something (e.g. "Monkey"):

- **Respond positively:** "Yes!" or "You're right".
- **Repeat** what they say, and **add** something extra: "Yes, monkey. Monkey is jumping."
- **Follow up** with something related (e.g. "You have a toy monkey" or "What does a monkey do?".)



Watch the 'Respond positively' video



Launchpad Card
Use with any book



Make it about them



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

This keeps them **interested**.

It helps a child to **learn** a new word or concept if they can **link** it to something in their life that they already know.

How do I include it?

Point out things that you know your child **likes** (e.g. ice cream or animals). Say *“That’s like your rabbit!”*, or *“You had ice cream at the beach too”*.

Show them the **link** using objects if possible e.g.:

- rabbit in the story and their soft toy rabbit.
- the beach in the story and a photo of your child at the beach.

Give your child a **chance to respond**, or give more ideas.

Remind your child of the story links **later** on (e.g. *“You’re in the bath! Just like our story”*).



Watch the ‘Make it about them’ video



Launchpad Card
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Ask questions



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

- It draws **attention** to important things happening in the story.
- It helps your child to **understand** the story.
- It keeps your child **focused** on the story.

How do I include it?

Questions can be:

- **About the story** plot.
- **Linked to your child's interests** or experiences (e.g. "Where have we seen a dog like that?").
- **At your child's level and just slightly above**, to stretch them. What/who questions where your child can see the answer in the pictures are easiest. Questions that require your child to remember something, make a link or predict something will be more tricky (e.g. "what will happen next?")
- **Open** (try not to ask yes/no questions).
- **Varied**
- Mixed in with **comments** too.

Give your child plenty of time to respond. If they are unsure, give them more time or a supportive prompt before showing them (e.g. "How does he feel? (pause for answer). He is feeling... (pause for answer)... I think he feels sad").

Respond positively and **follow up** on whatever they say.



Watch the 'Ask questions' video



Launchpad Card
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Say "Well done"



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

It is important for **developing self-esteem** to be praised and feel valued.

Specific praise for specific actions helps children to know **exactly** what they did well, and can repeat again in the future.

How do I include it?

Be positive about: listening, ideas, joining in, turning the pages, trying hard etc.

Try:

- "Thank you"
- "Good idea"
- "Yes!"
- "I like the way you ___"
- "Yes! You're right, it's a ___"
- "Great try!"
- "I like the way you're thinking about it"
- "Thanks for showing me"



Watch the 'Say "Well done"' video



Launchpad Card
Use with any book



Use your voice and facial expression



When?

Whilst reading.

Why is it important?

Voice and facial expression help keep your child's **attention**, by making it **fun** and **interesting**.

It also helps to give another **clue** about what is **happening**, or how the characters are **feeling**, so your child does not have to rely solely on understanding the words.

How do I include it?

Make sure your **child can see your face**.

Use **different voices** for different characters.

Exaggerate the normal “*up and down*” sounds of talking.

Contrast **loud and quiet** talking.

Use dramatic **pauses**.

Exaggerate feelings from the story using your **facial expression** (e.g. shock, wonder, happiness).



Watch the ‘Use your voice and facial expression’ video



Launchpad Card
Use with any book



Retell the story together



When?

After reading.

Why is it important?

Telling stories is a really important part of life. This includes not just make believe stories, but also talking about real life and things that have happened.

How do I include it?

After reading the story, close the book and say: *“Let’s tell the story our own way. Can you help me?”*.

Ways to help your child:

- **Questions** (e.g. *“Who was in our story?”*, *“What happened?”*)
- Use **pointing, gesture and facial expression**.
- **Unfinished sentences** for your child to complete: (e.g. *“Crocodile went to _____ (school)”*).
- **Act out the story** to reduce pressure on verbal retell.
- Give **instructions** (e.g. *“put donkey into the boat”*).

Accept, repeat and expand on what your child says. (e.g. *“Crocodile bang”*, you could say *“Yes, crocodile shut the door. It went ‘bang!’”*)

Aim to **shift the story teller role from yourself towards your child** by pausing regularly, even if they’re not saying much.

Remember participation can be by pointing, gesture, acting or facial expression, **not just words**.



Watch the ‘Retell the story’ video



Launchpad Card
Use with any book



Focus on important words from the story



When?

After reading.

Why is it important?

Some words are important, as they **help us to understand the story plot**. Some are common, and **useful in everyday life**.

Focusing on important words helps your child to understand and use them.

How do I include it?

Select words that are **important** to the story or important in your child's life. *"Let's talk about an important word from the story. The word is _____. Can you remember where we heard that word in the story?"*.

Praise them for having a try, help them if required.

Play a game which helps your child **understand the meaning** of the word and gives them an **opportunity to use it** (or hear you using it).

You could **make up a game** (using objects in the house, or role play), or use our story-specific cards to help you.



Watch the 'Focus on important words' video



Launchpad Card
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Finish story time clearly



When?

After reading.

Why is it important?

This helps your child to understand that story time is finished, but they can expect to do it again soon.

How do I include it?

Recap what you have done (e.g. “we read our story, and played a fun game”).

Remind your child how much you have **enjoyed** spending time reading with them (e.g. “That was really fun, thank you! I’m looking forward to doing this again tomorrow”).

Support them to choose a star for their chart, which reflects what they have done well (e.g. “your star is for turning the pages. Well done”). Use either our pre-written stars, or write your child’s success on a blank star.



Watch the ‘Finish story time clearly’ video