

Try these top tips, to encourage independence in general and reading in particular - and loving both!

Praise

Boys need lots of praise. Often they see themselves as getting attention for all the wrong reasons. So, give your son lots of approval for all the right reasons! A good rule of thumb is to try to say three positive things to every negative. When giving praise, try to be specific about what it is your son has done to earn the praise.

Talk

If you want to help your son to do better, it's important to get him talking (and listening!) right from the start. You can help in several ways:

Show an interest in what your son is doing (even if the subject doesn't interest you!) and ask questions about it.

Talk with him, rather than at him.

It's important to be patient: listen with interest, keep the conversation going, ask questions and don't leap in with an answer. Easier said than done!

Be independent

To help your son to be independent from an early age, you could encourage him to:

- get himself dressed in the morning,
- make a list of everything he needs for school that day,
- make his own decisions about a few things in the week's routine.

You can do it!

Boys often feel that mistakes equal failure. A boy's response is to say that he 'can't do it'. To help your son feel that he CAN do it, give him lots of encouragement when he does something well. It's also important to remember that mistakes don't equal failure; it's just the way we learn.

Read, read, read!

It's really important to show boys that reading is an 'ok' thing for men to do. So, granddads, dads, brothers, uncles... you need to get reading too! Reading together is important for boys of all ages as it helps them realise that it's not only a skill for life, but also good fun too.

- Read with expression.
- Talk about the characters, plot and pictures along the way.
- Ask him to guess what might happen next.

Reading isn't just about books!

Encourage your son to read when you are out and about together. Try reading labels, signs, posters, instructions... the list is endless. Words are everywhere, so read them