

# Keep Trying

by Jane Buxton

illustrated by Trevor Pye

## Overview

This text is about achieving success through encouragement and practice. Dad supports his son in learning a number of skills by encouraging him to “Keep trying” and then the child returns the favour by helping Dad learn to skip. There is a big book version of this text (item 12857), and an audio version is available on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2001*.

**Curriculum link:** health and physical education

## Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency vocabulary
- the initial consonant blends “cl”, “sk”, “sw”, “tr”
- the contraction “can’t”
- the irregular verb “could”
- the repetition in the text
- the use of direct speech
- the use of exclamation marks
- the use of larger print for emphasis on the right-hand pages and in the last line on page 12
- the passage of time that occurs between the events of the left and the right pages
- the safety equipment featured in the illustrations
- the relationship between the child and his father conveyed in the text and the illustrations.

## Setting the scene

Ask the children to recall learning a new skill. Draw out the idea that it takes time to develop proficiency. Use the example of a young child learning to walk. Encourage the children to share their observations of younger children they know. Try to emphasise skills and activities that do not involve formal “lessons”. *When you were learning to ride a bike/catch a ball, how did you feel? Did anyone help you? How did you feel when you managed it?*

## The first reading

(For a shared reading, it may be more convenient to use the enlarged edition.)

Look at the cover illustration. *What is the boy trying to do? How is he feeling?* The expression on his face, the position of his body, and the “wobble” lines around him all suggest that he is having trouble. *What should he do to get better at skating? Can you read the title?* Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – Note that Dad is close to the boy and poised ready to help but is letting the boy have a go himself.

Listen to the children read the text themselves, offering help as necessary. The introductory discussion and the framework of high-frequency vocabulary should provide strong support.

Page 3 – Note the change in tense between the left and right pages that signals the passing of time. Some children may have difficulty with the syntax, preferring to say “And I can” rather than “And I could”. Orient them to the word “could” by asking *Do you think he could?*

The print is slightly larger on the right-hand pages. *How does the author want you to read this page?*

From this point, the pattern of the text is established. As the children read, draw their attention to the initial consonant blends of the new verbs on each page. Note their responses to the variation in the text structure on page 12.

When they have finished reading, encourage the group to compare and discuss the front and back covers.

### Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their use of appropriate phrasing and expression.

The extensive use of high-frequency words within this text offers an opportunity to monitor children’s word knowledge. Ask the children to locate specific high-frequency words. *Can you read me a sentence that includes the word “you”?*

Focus on any of the initial consonants or blends that the children may have been unsure of. Locate the words in context and make a list of other words that start the same way.

Focus on the word “trying”. Locate the other verbs in the text and add “ing”. Note that some, such as “skate”, will need to lose the final “e” and that “swim” will need an extra “m”.

Discuss the use of the contraction “can’t”. Write the word “cannot” on the whiteboard and show how the apostrophe replaces “no”. Explore the idea that “can” and “can’t” are opposites. List other pairs of contractions that are opposites.

Focus on the word family “could”, “would”, and “should”.

Look at the use of speech marks. Choose a left-hand page. *What did Dad say? What did the boy say?* To illustrate the point that all words within the speech marks are spoken, read the text again, breaking it into parts with a reader, Dad’s voice, and the child’s voice.

Discuss the use of exclamation marks for emphasis.

## Suggestions for further activities

Listen to the text on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2001*.

Read the big book.

Give each child a piece of paper divided in two and ask them to draw a picture of themselves while they were learning a new skill and a picture of themselves after they had learned it. Ask them to add captions under each picture.

Take photographs or draw pictures of something that the children have just learnt. Add captions or speech bubbles.

As a group, develop a timeline from being a baby to being five years old. Include on it some of the things that the children have learnt over that time.

Interview some adults. *What did you find hard to learn to do?*

Read the Ready to Read book *Ready, Steady, Jump!* This features a spider who “keeps trying”.