



ENCOURAGE children to use good local school dictionaries. | Pexels

## TECHNOLOGY

# Don't just 'Google it', encourage your child to use a dictionary

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THE majority of us are guilty of looking up facts or the definition of words on Google or other search engines. We've let go of using dictionaries completely.

However, according to Dr Phillip Louw: Publishing Manager of Dictionaries and Literature, Oxford University Press Southern Africa, "the language expressing those facts is not suitable for your child's age group, education phase 1 or literacy level (even less so after the educational backlogs created by the pandemic); and does not have the subject vocabulary as specified by the curriculum, the language used in the classroom, or the dialect unique to our country".

Most of the explanations on Google are in a language meant for adults.

Evidence from studies conducted in South Africa states that 78% of pupils in Grade 4 are struggling to read for meaning, and are among the worst performers of countries ranked for maths and science in several

major international studies.

Hence, why it is important to make reading as manageable as possible, "by teaching children the correct language and subject terminology they need to know from the start so that they can understand what is said in the classroom and achieve success in tests and exams", Louw explains.

In addition, using curriculum-based, age-appropriate language from the start can improve or help the progress of your child's reading ability.

"For parents and teachers, it boils down to encouraging children to use good local school dictionaries," he adds

There are many benefits to using dictionaries, such as spelling, pronunciation, grammar, word families, prepositions, phrasal verbs, idioms and collocations.

The right school dictionary will not only encourage literacy and support understanding but may make the difference between failure and success at school. So, dust off that dictionary and encourage your child to use it.