



Parents guide to Phonics



Introduction

When children enter the Reception class they take part in high-quality phonics sessions every day. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games, where the emphasis is on children's active participation. They learn to use their phonic knowledge for reading and writing activities in their independent play.

The aim of this booklet is to give you a clear picture of how we approach the teaching of phonics and word recognition and how, as a parent, you can support and encourage your child at home.

From a very early stage, children develop awareness of different sounds in spoken language. They develop understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds and they learn to match these sounds to letters. Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds, for example c as in 'cat', ll as in 'fell', ee as in 'sheep'.

Children use their phonic knowledge when they are reading and writing. This approach has been shown to provide a quick and efficient way for most young children to learn to read words on the page fluently and accurately. We want children to develop this skill so that it becomes automatic. This also greatly helps them with their spelling.

We use a systematic phonics programme called Letters and Sounds. Letters and Sounds is divided into 6 phases, with each building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning.

Ideas and games for children working within Phase 2 and 3 to play at home with an adult.

Learning to hear letter sounds (phonemes) at the *beginning of words*

Once the child can distinguish between sounds they can begin to hear the sound at the beginning of words. Playing games like I spy are really easy and very effective. Again as they develop confidence you can let them make you guess their word!

Learning to hear *all the sounds(phonemes) in words.*

Play games where you say the phoneme in short words such as u-p, (CV consonant, vowel) or c-a-t, (CVC) get the child to tell you what the word is. As they get more competent you can build up to longer words that contain digraphs. F-i-sh, h-ai-r-b-r-u-sh etc. They can also do the same for you. Get them to think about breaking the word down into phonemes.

Recognising what the letters (graphemes) look like and the sounds they make

This is where the coins we sent home in the reading pack will come in useful. Turn over the coins so you cannot see the grapheme. They can turn over one at a time and either make you do the action to let them guess the sound or vice versa.

Hunt the letter. Using the coins, the children can try and find as many letters as they can that you have hidden. Obviously telling you their phoneme and or grapheme! If they are ready for the next step you can hide 3 letters (CVC) and they have to make a word with the ones, they have found.

Reading words including Tricky words that cannot be phonetically read.

Pairs

You need 2 sets of word cards. Pick out the word cards that your child already knows for the first few times you play the game so that they enjoy it and succeed. Then, gradually take out some of the word cards they know and replace them with a number of words they don't know. Place the 2 sets of word cards you have chosen face down. Turn one card over and say the word, turn another card over and say the word. If they match and you have made a pair you can keep the pair and you have another go. If they did not match it is the next person's turn. Keep going until all the words have been paired.

Snap

You need 2 sets of word cards. Each person has a pile of cards they keep face down. Each person turns a card over in turn and says the word they turn over. If they match you have to shout the word (and not snap). The first person to shout the word that matches is the winner of the cards on the table. Keep going until all the cards have been won.

Silly sentence

Use one set of word cards. Spread the word cards face down. Pick 3 cards and turn them face up, say the words as they are turned up. Now try and make up a silly sentence that includes all 3 words on the cards.

Reading phonetically spelt words

Jigsaw words

To begin with the children, need to see each of the phonemes in isolation so cutting up words into the sounds makes this very clear. Do one word at a time. Onto a strip of card write the CVC word e.g. cup. Then cut the word up into the individual letters. Make each cut a different shape to help them know where it goes if they are unsure. Again if they are ready for digraphs (two graphemes that make one phoneme) keep these together. Only chose words that can be phonetically blended together. G-oa-t. Move onto longer words once they are secure.

Sound buttons

This is a good physical game. Children can jump next to the letters you have laid out into words, they particularly like making the adult jump onto words they have made.

Hunt the letter (mentioned above)

Bath Crayons (If you can bare it!) Can they write the words you say to them?

Reading words that cannot be phonetically blended to make a word (Tricky words)

Make a sentence Have a few of the first 6 words face up. I, no, go, to, the, into. Tell them a sentence with the word in. Can they find it? Please don't **go**, what's **the** time?

Ideas and games for children working within Phase 4 and 5 to play at home with an adult.

Where's the sound?

Give your child a sound that they must listen for in words. E.g. sh. Say a word containing the sound, e.g. shell, fishing or wash.

Your child puts their hands on their...

head if the sound is at the start,

on their waist if the sound is in the middle of the word,

on their bottom if the sound is at the end of the word.

Word chain

(A simple but challenging game that practices spelling skills)

To begin with the child says a word, e.g. baseball. Then you say a word that begins the last letter of this word e.g. little.

Baseball, little, egg, giant, table. No word is allowed to be repeated!

Password

Think of a word to be the "Password" and write it on a piece of paper. Your child has to guess what the word is but only the clue they are given is the first and last letters and the number of letters in between, e.g. p_ _ _ t. Score 1 point for each word and 5 points if they get the password.

Tricky word games

Bingo

You will need: A board for each player and counters or coins.

The list of words your child is currently learning.

Write some of the words into the spaces on each card, making each card slightly different. The 'bingo caller' says each word in turn and the players cover the words up. The winner is first to fill their board. To make this game easier for new readers, show them the word for them to match.

Matching pairs

You will need: Small pieces of card or paper with the words your child is currently learning written on each. Each word will need to be written twice so you can search for a matching pair. Turn all the cards face down on the table. And take turns to turn over two. When a matching pair is found that player can keep them. The winner is the person with the most pairs at the end of the game.

The Year 1 Screening Check

The phonics screening check will be taken individually by all children in Year 1, across England, week beginning 13th June. It is designed to give teachers and parents, information on how your child is progressing in phonics.

What is the phonic screening check? There will be two sections in this 40-word check and it will assess phonics skills and knowledge learnt through Reception and Year 1.

What will it check? It will check that your child can:

- Sound out and blend sounds in order to read simple words.
- Read phonically decodable one-syllable and two-syllable words, e.g. cat, sand, windmill.
- Read a selection of nonsense words which are referred to as pseudo words.

What are nonsense or pseudo words and why are they included? These are words that are phonically decodable but are not actual words with an associated meaning e.g. brip, snorb. Pseudo words are included in the check specifically to assess whether your son/daughter can decode a word using phonics skills and not their memory.

The pseudo words will be shown with a picture of a monster and they will be asked to tell their teacher what sort of monster it is by reading the word. This not only makes the check a bit more fun, but provides the children with a context for the nonsense word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have.

Crucially, it does not provide any clues, it just has to be able to decode it.

Is there a pass mark? The check is not about passing or failing but checking appropriate progress is being made. Children progress at different speeds so not reaching the threshold score does not necessarily mean there is a serious problem. Your child will re-sit the check the following summer term.

What happens to the results? We will report your child's results to you by the end of the summer term as well as to the local authority.



Useful websites

At Danehill we have subscribed to Phonics Play.

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

This is a great interactive website that has all the phonic phases. Some of the interactive games can be played for free but for a small annual fee parents can subscribe to this website too.

Other websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy/phonics/play/>

<http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>

