



## *Supporting Reading and Writing at Home*

### Skills for Reading and Writing

- Speaking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing.
- Even everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out offer you the chance to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. Through these activities, children hear the way language is put together into sentences for a purpose.
- Books are a rich source of new words for your child; words you would not use in everyday conversations appear in books. Children need to have a wide vocabulary to understand the meaning of books, so read aloud and share books as often as you can. They will enjoy it and it will be useful to them when they come across these words in their own reading later on.

As the children are taught the skills that they will need in order to be successful readers and writers, we focus on speaking and listening activities.

### Ways you can support your child at home

#### Speaking and Listening

**Make time to listen to your child talking** – as you meet them from school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, and bedtimes – any time!

**Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** – look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.

**Make a collection of different toy creatures** – for example, a duck or a snake, say the sound it makes as you play together, for example, ‘quack-quack’, ‘sssss’, and encourage your child to copy you.

**Listen at home** – switch off the TV and listen to the sounds, inside and outside. Can your child tell you the sounds they heard, in the same order?

**Play-a-tune** – and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!

**Use puppets and toys** – make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.



We explore body sounds, sounds in the environment, the difference in the sounds of percussion instruments, rhythm and rhyme, voice sounds and alliteration - words that all begin with the same initial sound - 'sad, Sammy **s**nake', 'big, **b**ad **b**ug'.

The skills of 'blending' and segmenting' are also taught in school and can be practiced at home (at an age appropriate level).

### Blending

We teach the children how to blend or merge sounds together to read words, E.g. c-a-t = cat.

### Segmenting

Children are taught how to segment each word to spell. E.g. cat = c-a-t  
The aim is for the child to read the whole word automatically.

These activities are all done orally. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds.

## Ways you can support your child at home

### Sound-talking or Robot-talking

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (sounds) and practise 'sound talk'. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

'I spy a p-e-g - peg.'

'I spy a c-u-p - cup.'

'Where's your other s-o-ck - sock?'

'Simon says - put your hands on your h-ea-d.'

'Simon says - touch your ch-i-n.'

The children are taught that the smallest unit of sound is called a 'phoneme'.

This is the order in which the 'phonemes' are taught and practised. Correct pronunciation is vital!

#### c not cuh or cee

Set 1 letters = s, a, t, p

Set 3 letters = g, o, c, k

Set 5 letters = h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

Set 7 letters = y, z, zz, qu

#### b not buh or bee

Set 2 letters = l, n, m, d

Set 4 letters = ck, e, u, r

Set 6 letters = j, v, w, x

#### a not ay .

This web address demonstrates the correct pronunciation:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW\\_v-1s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s)

A phoneme can be represented by more than one letter. E.g. ll as in bell , ss as in hiss , ck as in sock.



## Ways you can support your child at home

### Magnetic letters

Buy magnetic letters for your fridge, or for use with a tin tray. Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

### Making short words together

Make short words together, for example, it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met. As you select the letters, say them aloud: 'a-m – am', 'm-e-t – met'.

### Breaking words up

Read the word, break the word up and move the letters away, saying: 'met – m-e-t'.

### Both these activities help children to see that reading and spelling are reversible processes.

Spelling is harder than reading words – praise, don't criticise. Whiteboards and pens, and magic boards, are a good way for children to try out spellings and practise their handwriting as mistakes are easily erased or corrected.

Your child might be trying to use letters from their name to write; this shows that they know that writing needs real alphabet letters.

### Make or buy an alphabet poster.

## Ways you can support your child at home

### Set a timer

Call out one word at a time and get your child to spell it on a magic board or a small whiteboard, against the timer – remember, they can use magnetic letters.

### Play a game

Hunt the word - hide words in sand or flour, set a timer, hold up the word that you want them to hunt for, and 'go'! Repeat the word and encourage them to say – 'I am looking for the word 'the'.

### Play 'Pairs'

Turn over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: the the, to to, no no, go go,

Don't worry if they get some wrong! These are hard to remember – they need plenty of practice.

The children will also be taught the 'tricky' words – those that cannot be read or spelt using the sounds of the letters. E.g. to, no, the, go. This will be achieved through the use of flash cards and games.



## Getting Ready for Writing

The children are taught to write in lower-case letters, as well as capital letters (where appropriate). As most writing will be in lower-case letters it is useful if you can use these at home. A good start is for your child to write their name correctly, starting with a capital letter followed by lower-case letters.

### Ways you can support your child at home

#### Pencil hold

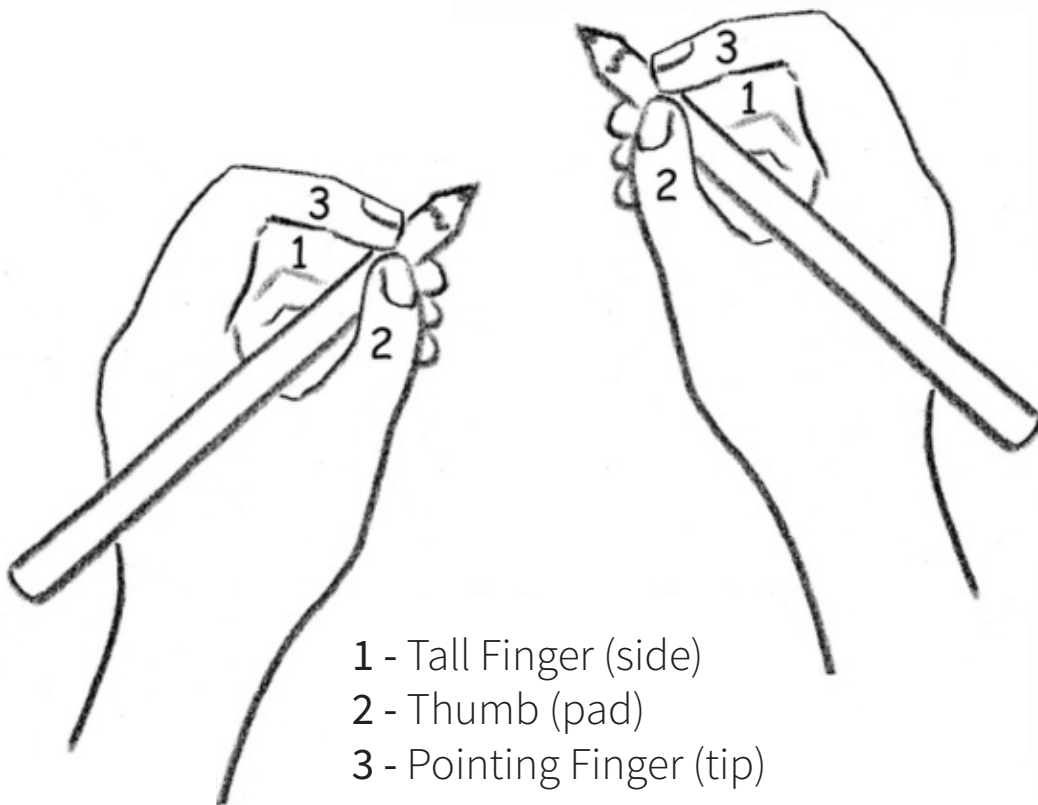
The 'pincer' movement needs to be practised. This is important as it enables children to hold a pencil properly as they write. Provide them with kitchen tongs and see if they can pick up small objects.

Move on to challenging them to pick up smaller things, for example, little cubes, sugar lumps, dried peas, lentils, first with chopsticks, then with tweezers.

Ask children to peg objects to a washing line.

Provide plenty of different types of pens and pencils; hold their hand to practise the correct grip.

### Tripod Pencil Grip



1 - Tall Finger (side)

2 - Thumb (pad)

3 - Pointing Finger (tip)

All fingers are slightly bent



## Correct Letter Formation

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z



## *Outcomes of the Phases of Letters and Sounds*

[www.letters-and-sounds.com](http://www.letters-and-sounds.com)

### **Phase One**

By the end of phase 1 children will have experienced a wealth of listening activities including songs, stories and rhymes. They will be able to distinguish between speech sounds and many will be able to blend and segment words orally. Some will also be able to recognise spoken words that rhyme and will be able to provide a string of rhyming words, but inability to do this does not prevent moving on to Phase Two as these speaking and listening activities continue.

### **Phase Two**

**By the end of Phase Two children should:**

- give the sound when shown any Phase Two letter, securing first the starter letters s, a, t, p, i, n;
- find any Phase Two letter, from a display, when given the sound;
- be able to orally blend and segment CVC words;
- be able to blend and segment in order to read and spell (using magnetic letters) VC words such as if, am, on, up and 'silly names' such as ip, ug and ock;
- be able to read the five tricky words the, to, I, no, go.
- Some children will not have fully grasped CVC blending and segmentation but may know all the Phase Two letters. CVC blending and segmentation continues throughout Phase Three so children can progress to the next stage even if they have not mastered CVC blending.

### **Phase Three**

**By the end of Phase Three children should:**

- give the sound when shown all or most Phase Two and Phase Three graphemes;
- find all or most Phase Two and Phase Three graphemes, from a display, when given the sound;
- be able to blend and read CVC words (i.e. single-syllable words consisting of Phase Two and Phase Three graphemes);
- be able to segment and make a phonemically plausible attempt at spelling CVC words (i.e. single-syllable words consisting of Phase Two and Phase Three graphemes);
- be able to read the tricky words he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are;
- be able to spell the tricky words the, to, I, no, go;
- write each letter correctly when following a model.

### **Phase Four**

**By the end of Phase Four children should:**

- give the sound when shown any Phase Two and Phase Three grapheme;
- find any Phase Two and Phase Three grapheme, from a display, when given the sound;
- be able to blend and read words containing adjacent consonants;
- be able to segment and spell words containing adjacent consonants;
- be able to read the tricky words some, one, said, come, do, so, were, when, have, there, out, like, little, what;
- be able to spell the tricky words he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are; write each letter, usually correctly.

### **Phase Five**

**By the end of Phase Five children should:**

- give the sound when shown any grapheme that has been taught;
- for any given sound, write the common graphemes;
- apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading and spelling words that are not completely decodable;
- read and spell phonically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words;
- read automatically all the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words;
- accurately spell most of the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words;
- form each letter correctly.

The more children are exposed to activities involving letters and sounds, the quicker they will consolidate their newly acquired skills. Your involvement in this learning is vital, and we ask that whenever possible you take time to encourage them to use their new knowledge through the activities outlined above.

Thank you for showing your interest and if anything that has been discussed needs more clarification, then please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or the appropriate Phase Leaders.