

Home Learning Ideas

Services for Young Children – Issue 4
Phonics Edition

Phonics

Whether your child is at nursery, pre-school, with a childminder or in Year R (and beyond) they will have been experiencing phonics activities each day.

This could seem daunting now that your child is at home but fear not, it is not as worrying as it might sound.

This guide will help you to understand the terms used on websites and give you some practical ideas of how you can support phonics at home.



What is Phonics

Phonics is a way of teaching reading.

Your child is taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) that they stand for. Once a child begins to learn the sounds, they can then put them together (blending) to make a word.

Before your child can confidently do this, they need to build an awareness of sound through developing their listening skills. This process starts at nursery, pre-school and at the childminder and continues as your child moves through school.

This guide will offer you a range of activities and games to try at home. It is important to continue to practise phonics so that your child can strengthen their understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds.

There are several great websites that will support you. Some websites will provide you with support in understanding how phonic knowledge is developed.



Phonics

Sometimes the terms used in phonics can sound a little strange. Here are just a few that you may see on the internet

Phoneme:



This is the smallest unit of sound and if your child is in Year R, they will have been learning these as part of their journey through phonics.

When your child 'says' the letter sound this is a phoneme.

GPC (grapheme-phoneme correspondence):

This is the symbol that represents the sound a letter makes. Sometimes it is simply called letter-sound correspondence but occasionally you might see it as GPC.

Pure sounds:

Some websites will provide you with support in understanding how this process works.

Key to supporting your child is understanding that the sounds need to be pronounced carefully; this is referred to as PURE sounds. There are many websites that will help you with this including [Oxford Owl: Help your child learn](https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/learn-to-read-phonics/) where you will find a video link and an audio guide.

Grapheme:

This is the written letter that represents a sound (phoneme). It might be a single letter, or it might be a group of letters such as ai, igh, oa.



When your child writes the letter, or group of letters this is a grapheme.

Blending and segmenting:

Blending is when we pull together individual sounds to make words.

Segmenting is about breaking words down into individual sounds.

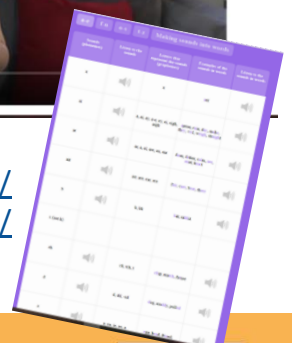
Your child needs to have an awareness of sounds and know some of the phonemes and graphemes to be able to do this.



Video: How to say the sounds



<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/learn-to-read-phonics/>



Phase 1

Phase 1

Before your child learns about letters and phonics, they need to learn to listen carefully and talk about what they hear, see and do.

Avoid background noise such as heaters and buzzing lights. A top tip for this is to turn off the TV!



Mrs Browning had a bag game

Using the 'Old MacDonald had a farm' song, try this game to help your child identify different sounds

*Mrs Browning had a bag,
ee i ee i o,
And in that bag she had a.....*

Stop. Ask your child to listen while you make a sound with the object in the bag.

ee i ee i o,

Continue the song but make the sound with your voices.

With a crunch-crunch here, and a crunch-crunch there,
Here a crunch, there a crunch, everywhere a crunch-crunch.
*Mrs Browning had a bag,
ee i ee i o.*



One Man Band

What sounds can you make with your body?

The following link will take you to a video which will provide music to make the sounds to.

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/sounds/one-man-band>



Nursery Rhymes

It is important for children to hear and sing nursery rhymes as they support reading and writing as they get older.

You can find lots of clips online including this compilation of signed rhymes from Mr Tumble

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/something-special-nursery-rhyme-compilation>

Phase 1

Suggestions for objects that rhyme

Socks and a box
Some glue and a shoe
Stone and a phone
Hat and a toy cat
Log and a toy dog



Rhyming Soup

You will need a big saucepan, a spoon and a selection of objects or pictures that rhyme.

Say the following rhyme and use the objects. If you are feeling brave, try and sing the rhyme to the tune of 'Pop goes the Weasel.'

*I'm making lots of silly soup,
I'm making soup that's silly,
I'm going to cook it in the fridge
To make it nice and chilly.
In goes a hat and a*

Invite your child to add the objects that rhyme to the pan and give it a stir and take a taste. Pretend it is delicious and sing again with a different rhyming object. Keep adding objects to the soup and encourage your child to try and remember them all.

Challenge:

Can they think of other words that rhyme, e.g. hat, cat, bat? Have fun!

Remember to give your child plenty of time to think before you expect them to respond



Mirror Play

Look in the mirror with your child and make different faces. Copy movements of the lips and tongue.

Invite your child to watch their mouths when they make sounds.

Do your teeth show when you say 'Boo!'? Does your tongue stick out when you say 'the'? What happens when you say your name? Say 't.v.' and 'car' and 'shhhhh'.

Phase 2

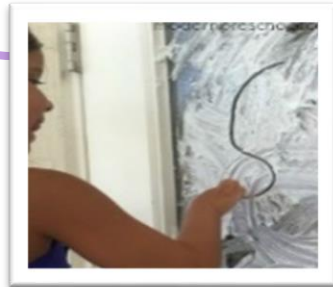
Phase 2

Children continue to experience Phase One activities. They will have also learnt some specific sounds and letters such as these:

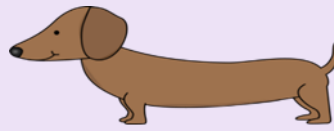
s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c,
k, ck, e, u, r, h, b, f, ff, l, ll,
ss

Quick write

Instead of writing with a pencil, try forming letters in sprinkled salt or sugar or even get your child washing the windows with a sponge and then write the letter in the soap.



Sid the Segmenting Sausage dog.



This activity will help with blending and segmenting

You will need a small collection of objects or pictures which could be hidden in a bag. Your child pulls out an object and say the sounds that make the word. For example, p-o-t.

Repeat the word by sound talking but this time point to each blank square underneath Sid the dog.

What sound can you hear at the beginning and at the end of the word? I can hear an 'o' in pot. Where is the 'o' in pot?

You could use letter cards to make the words or even ask your child to write the letters.

Challenge:

Can your child write the letter shape of the letter sound you say?

Suggestions for objects

pin, mat, pot, mop,
dog, pad, pig, cat,
cap, sock, net, peg,
ted, tin, bus, bat, red,
hat, bell, doll, bag

Try not to have more than six objects at a time.

Musical Corners

Write four words on paper or card and put them in different parts of the room. Put another set of the same words in a bag.

Play some music and dance around! When the music stops each person chooses a word to stand next to. One person picks a word out of the bag and your child can have a go at reading it. If someone is stood with that word in the space, they either lose a life or they are out, up to you!

You could keep a score if you like.



For a list of the tricky words learnt in school use the following link:

<https://www.letter-s-and-sounds.com/resources/p2tricky.pdf>

You could use any words that your child is learning to read.

Phase 3

Phase 3

When two letters are combined that is called a digraph and when three letters are combined it is known as a trigraph.

j, v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu, ch, sh, th, ng, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

It is useful to give letters a meaningful context e.g. M is for Mummy. This will help your child understand.

Magic Writing



Disappearing letters – write some of the words from the following list in chalk on either a wall or paving outside.

<https://www.letters-and-sounds.com/resources/p2tricky.pdf>

Your child can then use a large brush to trace over the chalk letters until the chalk has disappeared. You can do this several times.

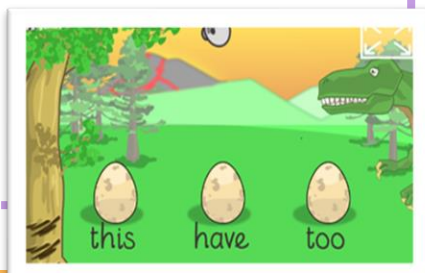


Appearing letters - help your child to write words using a wax candle (or white crayon) on white paper and then brush over with watered down paint to make the words re-appear.

Dinosaur Eggs

Some words have tricky parts in them and cannot be sounded out. There are a variety of websites available to support your child with learning these words. For example, Dinosaur eggs, a game found on the ICT Games website is great fun!

<https://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/dinosaurEggsHF/index.Html>



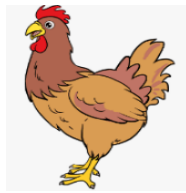
Phase 3

Syllables

Help your child to clap out the syllables in their name.

Who has the most beats and who has the least?

When out for a walk, spot features of interest and challenge your child to clap or stamp out the beats in the word. You could do this with any household objects or toys as well.



Kim's Game

To play the game:

Place **four to six objects** on a tray and cover objects with a blanket, towel, or any piece of fabric you have (an item of clothing would work).

You then take an object away and reveal the contents of the tray. Your child can then take a guess at what has magically disappeared. To help your child think about the syllables you could get them to clap the syllables of the object that has disappeared.

What is a syllable?

Syllables are often referred to as the beats in a word, for example:

Chicken has two syllables.

Chick / en
1 2

Suggested pictures or objects for Kim's game

Sham/poo, cob/web, car/park,
tin/foil, wait/er, ruck/sack,
bat/man, rab/bit,

Challenge

Can your child have a go at writing the first syllable and then the second syllable?



Batman Writing



On a black cut out shape of a bat, ask your child to write words or even a special message using a pencil. If they shine a torch on it, can they spot the words?

You could print a picture of a bat, draw a picture of a bat, or even just write on some black paper.

Phase 4

Phase 4

By the time children reach phase 4 they will have been reading simple words and captions. They will know the letter names and be able to read and spell many of the tricky words. This phase will help them to strengthen their knowledge and understanding and help them to read words with more than one syllable.

<https://www.letters-and-sounds.com/resources/p2tricky.pdf>

Vowels: a, e, i, o, u

Consonants: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z

Phonics using technology

There is a wonderful variety of educational websites that allow children the chance to practise their phonics with a great range of games that will engage your child to join in.

Bingo

Bingo games are a great way of helping your child practise blending words for reading. There are many websites with these sorts of games such as ICT Games.

<https://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/bingoOriginal/index.htm>



Sentence Substitution

How many sentences can your child make using the words on the screen?

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/SentSubPhase4.html>



Popcorn Balloons



This is a great game for the family to play. You will need balloons, pictures of balloons, tape, and a large sheet.

Tape the following pictures to balloons: frog, flag, brush, crown, lamp, hand.

Stretch out a large fabric sheet and place all balloons on top. Each family member holds a piece of the fabric and moves it up and down to make the popcorn balloons bounce / pop off. Can your child catch the balloon and write what they have caught? **E.g. f-r-o-g, c-r-ow-n**

If you do not have pictures to fix to the balloons you could always draw pictures of them.

Phase 4

Walk The Plank

To play this game you will need to create a pirate obstacle course inside or outside first. It can be as difficult or as easy as you like. Cushions or a skipping rope would also be good to use if you have not got a plank

You also need a selection of cards with letters on for your child to use, these are placed at the start of your obstacle course.

At the start of the obstacle course give your child a word to listen carefully to. Let your child sound out the word you have said to them and then find the right letter cards. They then walk the plank and make the word using the letter cards on the other side.

You can create the letter cards by writing the letters of the words you plan to use on paper or card squares or there are websites that create these for you to print and cut out such as the Phonics Play website

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/PrintableResources.htm>

Possible words you could use:

Stop, shop, chop, chest, crest, cress, cross, crop, stop.

You will only need the following letter cards for these words

s, t, o, p, sh, ch, e, c, r, ss,



If you feel like it you could create pirate costumes and hats before you play this game.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/makes/swashbuckle-make-your-own-pirate-hat-eyepatch?collection=swashbuckle-pirate-party>

Challenge: Can your child write the words, and can they put them in a sentence?

