



Children in the Early Years will need to experience a wide range of activities and experiences to develop their early reading and writing skills, for example listening, singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, listening to them and joining in conversations, mark making, painting and pretend play. These activities will help your child take the first important steps towards reading and writing.

At Nursery: Children learn through lots of play and are encouraged to use their increasing phonics knowledge in freely chosen activities. We use signing to introduce letter sounds.

At Home: Spending quality time with your children, using ideas below can really help to strengthen and build on the learning and knowledge they have gained whilst at nursery. This will form a strong foundation for when they move into reception and begin to learn letter sounds and forming words.

Speaking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing

From a very early stage, children develop an awareness of the different sounds in our spoken language. They learn how to use their voices to make contact with you and to let people know what they need and how they are feeling. As parents and carers, you best understand how your child communicates; you are the key people in helping them develop their speaking and listening skills.

Phase 1

Whilst your child is of nursery school age, they will be working through phase one.

Your child will be learning to

- Have fun with sounds
- Listen carefully
- Develop their vocabulary
- Speak confidently to you, other adults and children
- Tune into sounds
- Listen and remember sounds
- Talk about sounds
- Understand that spoken words are made up of different sounds

Phase 1 consists of seven interlinking parts

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting
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You can help your child develop in each of these by trying some of the ideas below. Remember that all these activities should be fun and interactive. The emphasis is on developing the ability to distinguish between different sounds and create different sounds.

Ways to support your child at home:

Environmental sounds

- Go on a listening walk – when walking down the road make a point of listening to different sounds: cars revving, people talking, birds singing, dogs barking. When you get home try and remember all the sounds you hear.
- Make sounds using a range of props such as running a stick along a fence or tapping on a bin lid etc...
- Invent a secret family knock for entering rooms.
- Play sound lotto. Commercial sound lotto can be purchased from many children's toy shops but you could also make your own from your sound walk.

Instrumental sounds

- Make your own musical instruments using cardboard rolls, tins, dried peas, rice, pasta, beans or stones. Shake these loudly, softly, as you are marching, skipping or stomping. Play 'guess what's inside the instrument?'
- Sing favourite songs loudly and then softly or add new words or sounds.
- Listen to a range of music with your child from rap to classical. Encourage your child to move in response to the variety of musical styles and moods.

Body percussion

- Learn some action rhymes
- Play some CDs. Clap along with familiar rhymes and learn new ones.
- Listen to the sounds your feet make when walking/running/skipping; slowly, softly, fast, stomping hard, in flip-flops, boots, high heels etc.
- Try different types of claps; clap your hands softly, fast and make a pattern for your child to follow. Do the same clapping your thighs or stomping your feet. Tap your fingers. Click your tongue etc...

Rhythm and rhyme

- Get into the rhythm of our language; bounce your children on your knees to the rhythm of a song or nursery rhyme; march or clap to a chant or poem.
- Help your child move to the rhythm of a song or rhyme.
- Read or say poems, songs, nursery songs and rhyming stories as often as you can, try to use gestures, tap regular beats and pauses to emphasise the rhythm of the piece.
- Add percussion to mark the beats using your hands, feet or instruments.
- Try out rhythmic chanting such as 'two, four, six eight, hurry up or we'll be late' or 'bip bop boo, who are you?'
- Find a word that rhymes with names of people in your family such as 'Claire bear' or Erin derin'

Alliteration

- Make up silly names by adding another word to names which begin with the same sound such as 'silly Sally, bouncy Bobby, glittery Gary'
- Make up sentences using the same sound for each word such as 'big bouncy blue ball'

When children have mastered phase 1, we move on to blending letter sounds together and segmenting words to see what letter sounds make up simple words.

For example c-a-t cat d-o-g dog