

READ AND WRITE TOGETHER

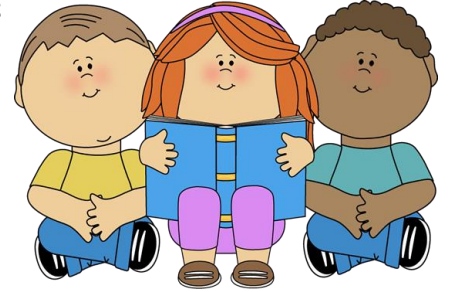
Learning about sounds

Children have lots of different ways to help them read, such as:

- Looking at pictures;
- Following the story;
- Reorganising whole words;
- Knowing about letter sounds or phonics.

Of course, there are lots of other clues they use to read.

Knowing how sounds work is important for writing too.



For young children there are lots of fun ways to help them begin to:

- ✓ Start telling one sound from another;
- ✓ Copy sounds;
- ✓ Hear sounds which are the same;
- ✓ Hear the sounds at the beginning of words;
- ✓ Hear the sounds at the end of words which rhyme.

The activities here will help prepare your child for work on sounds or phonics at school.

As they get older they will begin to learn all the different sounds and how to read and write them. To do this, your child needs to be a good listener.

First steps at home in learning about sounds

When your child is younger there are plenty of simple things you can do together which will help your child to:

- Listen carefully;
- Notice the difference between different sounds;
- Practise the many sounds their voices can make;
- Notice rhymes;
- Play with words that start with the same sound.

If your child can do these things by the time they start school, they'll be well on their way in learning about the phonics they need to read and write.

You can help get your child get started by playing fun games like the ones here.

Learning should be fun. If it isn't, it's better to leave it for a while. Children learn at different rates. But these games should keep your child interested if they don't go on too long. Use puppets and pictures and objects to play with.

Guess what?

You will need:

- A bottle with some water in it;
- A mug;
- A spoon;
- A piece of paper.

Hide behind the door or the sofa and make some everyday sounds: shake the bottle of water, pour the water into a mug, stir and splash with a spoon.

Screw up a bit of paper, tear it, flap it.

Can your child guess what you're doing?



Sounds all around

Stop sometimes during the day, wherever you are. Listen to the sounds all around. How many things can you hear? Cars, birds, police sirens, dogs barking, footsteps, clocks ticking. Your child will notice sounds even in the quietest place: 'You're breathing.....I heard your tummy rumble...'

Making music

You will need some simple instruments such as:

- A shaker made out of a tin with dried beans inside;
- Pan-lid cymbals;
- An upside down pan and a wooden spoon for a drum;
- A baby's rattle;
- Two spoons to bang together;
- A nursery rhyme CD if possible.

Ask your child to find other things in the kitchen which could make sounds.

Play a CD (or sing your own song) and let your child bang along with it. Help them to listen to the rhythm and beat in time.

Body sounds

You'll only need a body for this!

Sing or play songs and get your child to add claps, knee pats, foot stamps, chest thumps or whatever. Each verse could be different. Help your child to listen so that they come in and stop at the right moment.

Hearing the rhyme

Sing or chant songs that rhyme. Help your child to match their movements to the tune. *March for The Grand Old Duke of York, skip for Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush, walk up and down to Postman Pat, make hand movements for the Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round and the Windscreen Wipers Go Swish, Swish, Swish.*

Voices

Play games which help your child to copy different sounds with their own voice.

Make your voice go down a slide: **wheee!**

Sound sad: **oh...**

Sound surprised: **ooooo!**

Shout in terror: **argh!**

Be a little mouse squeaking: **ee eee**

Hiss like a snake: **sssss**

Moo like a cow: **mmmmm**

Keep everyone quiet: **sh shhhh**

Sit on something prickly: **ow!**



Animal Noises

Make some picture cards of animals. You could cut pictures out of magazines or draw your own. Or you could use soft toys. Hold each one up in turn and ask your child to make the right noise. Make noises to the tune of *Old MacDonald had a Farm*.

Second steps ...

The next stage in phonics is to learn some of the sounds of the letters of the alphabet. You can help here too by playing games together at home that will help your child to:

- ✓ Make rhyming words;
- ✓ Pick out the sound at the beginning of a word;
- ✓ Know what sound some of the letters make;
- ✓ Recognise the letters that make some of the sounds.

Making the sounds of letters

Some letter sounds are quite hard to say without adding another sound. A letter like 'm' for 'mat' often sounds like 'muh'. Try to get rid of this extra sound so that your child just hears the letter 'mmm'.

Collections

This game helps your child to begin to hear the different sounds at the beginning of words. Start with **s**, **m**, **c** (as in cat), **t**, **g**, **h**.

You will need:

- A tray;
- Little toys and objects (plenty beginning with your chosen letter)
 - **(for S)** soap, saucer, salt, sock
 - **(for M)** mug, macaroni, mirror
 - **(for C)** cup, car, cardigan, cushion, card.

Put the first object on the tray. Say its name very clearly. Make the first sound last a long time 'ssssock'. Ask your child to find any other objects that start with the same sound.

After this...

You can go helping them to hear the first, last and main sound in words, know the sounds of all letters, or write the letters when they hear a sound. But this is for later on.

All these activities will give your child a good start in learning about phonics, and using what they know about sounds in reading and writing. This is just part of learning to read and write.

Sharing and enjoying a story with you or an older brother or sister, looking at the pictures, using a puppet to help you re-tell the story, or working out what a word might mean in a story are all important too. To be confident readers and writers children need to be able to work out the sounds in words. They also need to work out the meaning of what they read. They will need lots of practice of both, to grow up enjoying the things they read and write.

