

## Helping Your Child With Phonics

Children make super progress with effective phonic support from home and school. Working alongside each other, enables parents and teachers to develop children into confident listeners, readers and spellers. Phonic skills are taught in phases. Please read below for the details about each phase and ideas for how to support your child at home.

### What is Phase One Phonics?

Before children can hear letter sounds, they need to have developed good listening skills and attention. Phase one phonics is covered at the beginning of the nursery year. Many parents work on phase one activities without even realising it.

- \* Listening to environmental sounds such as animal noises, traffic sounds and noises in the home enable your child to develop the ability to concentrate and identify the sounds.
- \* Playing with musical instruments along with singing encourages children to hear the rhythm of words and the beat of the song. Clapping out the syllables in your child's name or other words is also a useful way.
- \* Nursery rhymes/rhyming games encourage your child to hear rhyming words and to hear the rhythm of words/sentences.
- \* Emphasising the first letter of names of objects helps children to hear the initial sounds. Playing I Spy for animal noises, colours and initial sounds is a brilliant way of developing their listening skills.
- \* Using silly voice sounds such as animal noises and sounds in stories encourages your child to manipulate their tongue to copy.
- \* Saying (segmenting) the sounds in words like a robot e.g. please pass me the c-u-p, is a really effective way of encouraging your child to hear and blend the sounds.

Phase one skills continue to be used in all of the phases of phonics so a lot of practice is needed for your child to use the aspects confidently.

Games/resources to support the different stages of Phonics can be found on websites such as

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

[www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)

[www.earlylearninghq.org.uk](http://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk) Literacy

[www.familylearning.org.uk](http://www.familylearning.org.uk) phonics games

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk)

[www.cbeebies.co.uk](http://www.cbeebies.co.uk) (Alphablocks, in particular, is one that they love)

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (Jolly Phonics songs – please use the link that says ‘in the correct order’)

[www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk) (English-games)

[www.jollylearning.co.uk](http://www.jollylearning.co.uk)

### What are Phase 2/Phase 3 Phonics?

In these phases, new letter sounds are introduced each week. It is easy to confuse the letter sound and the letter name. For example, the letter is called A/ay but the sound it makes is ‘a’ as in the word HAT = h-a-t. Learning the letter by its sound enables children to blend the sounds together when reading words.

As a school, we follow Jolly Phonics, so the sounds are **not** taught in alphabetical order. The sounds are taught in a way that encourages the children to learn the sounds individually and then combine letter sounds to build words. For example, s-a-t-i-p-n are the first sounds covered. This enables the children to build simple words such as sat, pin, pit, sap, etc.

Jolly Phonics encourages the children to link an action to the sound. This enables the children to recognise the sound from the action and the letter shape. These actions are listed below.

<b>Group 1</b>	
s	Weave hand in an s shape, like a snake, and say ssssss.
a	Wiggle fingers above elbow as if ants crawling on you and say a, a, a.
t	Turn head from side to side as if watching tennis and say t, t, t.
i	Pretend to be a mouse by wriggling fingers at end of nose and squeak i, i, i.
p	Pretend to puff out candles and say p, p, p.
n	Make a noise, as if you are a plane – hold arms out and say nnnnnn.
<b>Group 2</b>	
c k	Raise hands and snap fingers as if playing castanets and say ck, ck, ck.
e	Pretend to tap an egg on the side of a pan and crack it into the pan, saying eh, eh, eh.
h	Hold hand in front of mouth panting as if you are shaking out of breath and say h, h, h
r	Pretend to be a puppy holding a piece of rag, shaking head from side to side, and say rrrrrr.

m	Rub tummy as if seeing tasty food and say mmmmmm.
d	Beat hands up and down as if playing a drum and say d, d, d.
<b>Group 3</b>	
g	Spiral hand down, as if water going down the drain, and say g, g, g.
o	Pretend to turn light switch on and off and say o, o, o, o.
u	Pretend to be putting up an umbrella and say u, u, u.
l	Pretend to lick a lollipop and say l, l, l, l, l.
f	Let hands gently come together as if toy fish deflating, and say f, f, f, f, f, f.
b	Pretend to hit a ball with a bat and say b, b, b.
<b>Group 4</b>	
ai	Cup hand over ear and say ai, ai, ai
j	Pretend to wobble on a plate and say j, j, j.
oa	Bring hand over mouth as if you have done something wrong and say oh!
ie	Stand to attention and salute, saying ie ie.
ee or	Put hands on head as if ears on a donkey and say eeyore, eeyore.
<b>Group 5</b>	
z	Put arms out at sides and pretend to be a bee, saying zzzzzz.
w	Blow on to open hand, as if you are the wind, and say wh, wh, wh.
ng	Imagine you are a weightlifter, and pretend to lift a heavy weight above your head, saying ng...
v	Pretend to be holding the steering wheel of a van and say vvvvvv.
oo OO	Move head back and forth as if it is the cuckoo in a cuckoo clock, saying u, oo; u, oo (Little and long oo)
<b>Group 6</b>	
y	Pretend to be eating a yoghurt and say y, y, y.
x	Pretend to take an x-ray of someone with an x-ray gun and say ks, ks, ks.
ch	Move arms at sides as if you are a train and say ch, ch, ch.
sh	Place index finger of lips and say sh sh sh.
th th	Pretend to be naughty clowns and stick out tongue a little for the th, and further for the th sounds (this and thumb).
<b>Group 7</b>	
qu	Make a duck's beak with your hands and say qu, qu, qu.
ou	Pretend your finger is a needle and prick thumb saying ou, ou, ou.

oi	Cup hands around mouth and shout to another boat saying oi! Ship ahoy!
ue	Point to people around you and say you, you, you.
er	Roll hands over each other like a mixer and say er er er.
ar	Open mouth wide and say ah.

### How quickly do children learn the sounds?

Sounds are taught at a pace that the class teacher feels the children are capable of retaining and applying. As phonics is taught in school on a daily basis, it is amazing how fast children begin to point out sounds around them on signs, in books, etc.

### How are the sounds applied to learning to read?

As the children learn new sounds, they begin to blend sounds together almost immediately to build words. To begin, children are taught to build/segment/blend cvc (consonant-vowel-consonant) words such as tip, sat, pin, etc. Gradually they move on to sounds that are made from two letters (digraphs) such as ai, oa, ie, etc. Encouraging your child to say the sounds in unknown words helps them to segment and blend in order to read with confidence. Words can then be recalled and read on sight without having to say the sounds each time.

### What are tricky words?

Alongside each phase, children are taught tricky words that cannot be read by segmenting/blending. These words have to be remembered by sight and need lots of practice. Tricky words are shown in the checklist in the order that they are taught. They also link to the reading books that your child is given to bring home. The colours represent the coloured band that the reading book belongs to.

### What about writing the letters?

Alongside learning the letter sound, children use various multi-sensory methods to form/write the letters. Practicing the letter shape in the sand, tracing the letters with fingers/pencils, making letter shapes with playdough/pipecleaners, etc are all practiced in school.

Children need to develop the muscles in their hands to develop the strength for good pencil control. Activities in the early years, such as using tweezers, threading beads, scissor skills, pressing cubes together, pegging clothes onto washing lines, etc are used to develop these fine motor skills.

When children are ready, they begin to segment/blend/apply the letters as they do with reading. Hearing the sounds in the word enables them to spell it out as they are writing words.

Help!

Please remember that your class teacher is always there to answer any questions that you may have about phonics. A positive relationship between school and home will create an independent, confident learner.