



LEARNING TO READ
Information for Parents
and Carers



Helping your child with reading.

During their reception year the children will be introduced to the letters of the alphabet and the sounds that these letters make, also known as phonics. The scheme 'Jolly Phonics' is used which helps children to remember the different sounds by providing actions to accompany each letter sound. As the children become more familiar with the individual letter sounds they will then be able to put letters together to build words.

These are important skills but the skill of reading is more than just recognising letters and sounds. Lots of other activities take place during the reception year that help the children with their reading. For example, listening to stories and looking at books, singing nursery rhymes, talking in the role play area, show and tell time, using puppets, completing jigsaw puzzles, making and noticing patterns, music making. . . the list goes on!

The most important part of learning to read is to enjoy it!!! Sharing books together can be a really special time and can provide lots of opportunities for speaking and listening even before your child can recognise many letters. Discussing illustrations and talking about characters as well as retelling stories will all be helpful. And of course stories can be told without books too! Simply talking with your child about their day can become a story, or talking about the things you notice together when you are out and about, or making up your own stories in your own words.

What you can do to help your child learn to read.

- Read a story every day. Even when your child has become a competent reader sharing stories together will help to develop imagination, vocabulary, and understanding of story structures.
- Help your child to understand that print has meaning by running your finger under words as you read them.
- Sing nursery rhymes to help your child hear sounds in words.
- Be a good role model and show that reading is important, necessary and fun- eg. look up a recipe, use the TV guide, read labels, show that you enjoy reading. (newspapers, magazines, books)
- Join the library.
- Play 'I-spy' to encourage your child to listen for the initial sounds in words. Play 'I spy something ending in (?)' too to listen for final sounds in words.
- Use letter sounds rather than letter names. Avoid adding an 'er' or 'uh' sound to the end of letters, e.g. the letter 'm' should not be sounded 'mer'. Instead 'mmmm' would be correct. This enables children to blend sounds together.
- Reinforce the letter sounds learnt at school by playing games with your child's set of phonic cards. Can you find me the letter...? Show an action and ask your child to find the correct letter. Draw pictures of things beginning with different letters. Choose a card and go on a letter hunt...how many can you find in a magazine, around the house, when you're out? Use the cards to build simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, eg. cat, dog. Make up nonsense words as well as real words.
- It is not always possible to use phonic knowledge to read a word due to the complex nature of the English language. These 'tricky' key words will be given to your child in addition to the letter cards. Games such as 'snap' can be played with these words. Try to keep it fun and enjoyable.

As time goes on your child will become more confident at recognising letters and their corresponding sounds. They will reach a point where they are able to decode words by looking at individual letters, sound them out, and put the different sounds together to make a word. At this point they will bring home books with simple text to read to you. Your child will choose for him/herself books to bring home and share with you. These may be picture books, story books, non-fiction books, or poetry. A range of books are available for the children to choose from throughout the whole school. These books have been categorised to ensure they are appropriate for individual children and to ensure they succeed.

Books without text can also be valuable for reading. Such books help children to understand the structure of stories and can be a rich resource for developing language and vocabulary.

A final note...!

It is very easy to take reading for granted but it's not that easy! Below is a text written in code which may give you an idea what it might be like for your child to see text. Remember that when you are decoding it you already know your 'sounds' and you also know all the meanings of words. For your child these skills will all be new. Reading is hard work...try to make it as fun and enjoyable as possible for your child!

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A few clues:

The final symbol is a full stop.

ℳ is the letter e.

◆ is the letter s.

Many thanks, Lorna Elson.