

A Pocket Guide to...



Getting started with
reading

Background

Reading is a vital skill that all children need. It opens windows into different worlds through stories, it lets them explore their interests independently and enables them to access other areas of the curriculum confidently.

For that reason we put an enormous emphasis on supporting children to be able to read. To be a reader, children need to be able to decode the words in front of them but they also need to be able to understand and discuss what they have read.

When children start in Reception we focus on helping children to learn to decode but not at the expense of enjoying and discussing stories. Children still need to hear stories read to them every day and have the chance to discuss characters, retell stories and explore vocabulary. Phonics is a means to an end - we want children to develop decoding skills so they are able to develop a love of reading independently.

We also want children to be successful when they read so they enjoy reading. We aim for children to be given books with which are 90% fluent - they should be able to decode every word and read most of these without sounding out. Of course this takes practice and some children will find it easier than others to remember words.

This pamphlet gives you some suggestions and advice which might help your child when they start on their journey to reading. Some children will find reading and decoding tricky and so it is important we remember that they just can't do it - YET! We will support your child in practising and revisiting until they have mastered the skills they need to be a fluent reader and develop and love of reading.

Phonics Glossary

phoneme - a single unit of sound (e.g. the sound 'sss' in sun)

grapheme - how we represent a phoneme in written form (e.g. the letter 's')

Helping Your Child

Reading for Pleasure

Vocabulary has an enormous impact on future reading success and the more words children hear, the better! Talk about the words you come across - what do they mean? How might you use them in a different context?

Read every day - Make reading part of your daily routine. Model good reading so your child can hear what fluent reading sounds like.

Give opinions - discuss who your favourite character is and why? Encourage your child to discuss their favourite parts of a story. Did they like the book? Why/why not?

Be enthusiastic about reading and make sure your child knows you value the time spent reading together. Maybe find a special reading spot for sharing books together.

Talk about the illustrations. Can your child explain what is happening? Can they make predictions about what might happen next?



Visit the library regularly - let your child explore a breadth of reading materials and let them choose their own books. Be a role model and choose some books for yourself too so your child sees you as a reader.



Helping with phonics

Visit <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/> for advice and support.



Oral Blending - Have a selection of objects. Ask your child to select the correct object by sound-talking them. **e.g. can you find me the p-e-n?** Remember to make sure each sound is pronounced correctly (see website above).

Oral blending - Play 'Can You Touch Your...'. Ask your child to touch different parts of their body using sound-talk. **e.g.**
Can you touch your l-e-g?
Can you touch your f-ee-t?

Oral blending - What's That Noise? Use sound-talk to ask different questions. **e.g. What noise does a d-o-g make?**
What noise does a d-u-ck make?

Recognising graphemes - Become familiar with the rhymes for each sound from the website above. Use your child's Sound Book to practise saying the phonemes every day.

Pairs game - Choose 4-5 tricky graphemes and write them on pieces of paper. Make another copy and then turn them all over. Take turns to find the matching pairs, saying the grapheme as you find them.



Phonicsplay - There are various apps and websites such as phonicsplay.co.uk that let you practise saying the phonemes as quickly as possible.

Search 'five-minute mum phonics' - you will find lots of other ideas for practising grapheme recognition at home.