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Phonics Guidance for
Parents and Carers

What is phonics?

In Foundation Two, your child will be taking part in daily phonics sessions, which are taught in line with the 'Letters and Sounds' publication. The teaching of

Letters and Sounds develops children's skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. This will help your child to understand how the alphabet works and help them learn the skills needed to read and write.

The children are taught the individual sounds (phonemes) that letters or groups of letters (graphemes/ digraphs/ trigraphs) make. They begin at first by learning the sounds of letters rather than the names.

For example, a in apple rather than a in apron.

Children begin by learning to write the lower case letters; a,b,c and then the upper case later; A,B,C.

They are taught how to break down words in order to write them and how to read words by saying the sounds and merging (blending) them together.

Each week, your child will come home with an activity sheet that covers what they will be learning in phonics that week. Please support your child in learning their phonemes and keywords.

By the end of Foundation Two, your child will have been taught 42 phonemes that they will be expected to recognise and read and write in words and 100 keywords to read and write.

If you need any advice or have any questions about Letters and Sounds, please feel free to ask a member of the EYFS team.

Terminology

Your child will be using some of the following words on a daily basis. We have found that they enjoy using the correct vocabulary and pick it up very quickly. Here is a quick guide to explain what each term means;

Phoneme: A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word

Grapheme: The letter or letters that represent a phoneme e.g. 'igh' in night

Grapheme-phoneme correspondence: Recognising the spoken sound that is represented by a single or group of graphemes

Syllable: Single units of sound in a word eg. The word 'butterfly' has three syllables bu-tter-fly

Rhyme: Words that end with the same sound e.g. seat, beat and feet

Alliteration: Two or more words that begin with the same letter e.g. six, sizzling, sausages

Segment: To identify the individual sounds in a spoken word (e.g. h-i-m) and writing down letters for each sound to form a word

Blend: Recognising the letter sounds in a written word, for example c-u-p, and merging them in the order in which they are written to pronounce the word.

CVC word: A word that contains three phonemes, a consonant, a vowel and final consonant (e.g. cat, mop, tin, shark, sock, church)

Digraph: Two letters which make one sound e.g. sh, ck, th, ll

Split digraph: A digraph in which the two letters are not adjacent e.g. make

Trigraph: Three letters, which make one sound e.g. igh, dge, air

Tricky words: Words that can't be spelt phonetically and need to be learnt by sight e.g. because, another, the

What can I do to support my child at home?

You can support your child at home by helping them to learn to recognise the phonemes, write the phonemes, blend the sounds to read the words and giving them one of the words to write. Please practise these with your child as often as possible. Shorter bursts of time more frequently are more beneficial for your child's learning than one long session. Remember to review what they have learnt in previous weeks also.

Children learn best when they are having fun and through play. You may like to try one of the following activities with your child to support them with learning their phonemes and keywords.

- ❖ Play I spy - what can your child find that begins with a given sound?
- ❖ Point out letters/words on street signs or on signs in the shop
- ❖ Play 'Robot Talk' - you break a word down for your child to work out what the word is - e.g. c-oa-t = coat d-o-g = dog
- ❖ Write letters or words on paper and stick them around the house then go on a letter hunt - what sounds can your child recognise? Can they read the words?
- ❖ Practise writing phonemes in different ways - with pencils, chalks, crayons, pens, paint, water and a paintbrush outside, in the bath bubbles, with a stick in the mud, in sand
- ❖ Play Bingo - on a grid with four or six squares write a phoneme or word in each box and then have those and more. Pull one out of a bag. Can your child find it on their bingo grid?
- ❖ Write a shopping list and get your child to read it with you as you look round the shops and tick off each item or get your child to write the list before you leave home. Can they hear the sounds in the words they need to write?
- ❖ Play Musical Phonemes or keywords - play music, when it stops, show your child a letter or word. Can they tell you the sound or read the word?
- ❖ Cut up some phonemes or words and stick them in a hat or bag - pull one out. Can your child recognise the sound or read the word?
- ❖ Get your child to write the phonemes or keywords twice, then cut them up so you can play a game of pairs or snap. Make sure they say the sound each time or read the word.