

Letters and Sounds



Introduction

- Children learn a great deal from other people.
- As parents and carers, you are your child's first teachers. You have a powerful influence on your child's early learning.



The spoken language

- From a very early age, children develop an awareness of the different sounds in our spoken language(s).
- They learn how to use their voices:
 - to make contact with you
 - to let you know what they need
 - to show how they are feeling
- As parents and carers, you best understand your child's communications; you are key in helping them to develop their speaking and listening skills.



How can you help?

- Provide your child with lots of different opportunities to speak and listen with others:
 - Preparing meals
 - Tidying up
 - Putting shopping away
 - Getting ready to go out
- Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones
- Show you are interested in their conversation
- Read stories
- Use puppets and toys



The importance of speech sounds

- As children grow older, they will begin to understand the different sounds in languages, and join in with stories, songs, rhymes by clapping, stamping and skipping.
- This is an important stage, as the ears are beginning to tune into the important sounds they can hear, and discriminate.
- Over time, your child will begin to distinguish between different speech sounds (phonemes), and they will match sounds to letters (graphemes). This is called phonic knowledge.



Phase 1

- Your child will be learning to:
 - Have fun with sounds
 - Listen carefully
 - Develop their vocabulary
 - Speak confidently to you, other adults and children
 - Tune into sounds
 - Listen and remember sounds
 - Talk about sounds
 - Understand that spoken words are made up of different sounds



Phase 1

- Phase 1 is made up of 7 different areas:
 - Environmental sounds
 - Instrumental sounds
 - Body percussion
 - Rhythm and rhyme
 - Alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)
 - Voice sounds
 - Oral blending and segmenting



Phase 2

- This begins in the Reception year
- Children begin to formally learn the sounds in the English language
- Phonics sessions are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games



Not all children will learn at the same rate!

- Your child should be supported *whatever* their rate of learning
- There is a very close link between *difficulty with phonics and hearing*, so if your child is making progress more slowly than expected, it is worth having their hearing checked.



Sound talk

- The separate sounds (phonemes) are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word.
- The merging is called **blending**, and is a vital skill for reading.
- Eg: c-a-t = cat



Sound talk

- Children will also learn to do this the other way round. Eg: cat = c-a-t
- The whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its sounds (phonemes) in order, through the word.
- This is called **segmenting**, and is a vital skill for spelling.



Learning the phonemes

- Children will learn the phonemes (sounds) for a number of letters (graphemes)
- They will also learn that some phonemes are made up of more than one letter,
eg: /ll/ as in b-e-ll
- We use actions to help to remember the phonemes



Saying the sounds

- Your child will be taught how to pronounce the sounds (phonemes) correctly to make blending easier
- Sounds should be sustained where possible (eg, sss, mmm, fff)
- If not, 'uh' sounds after consonants should be reduced where possible (eg, try to avoid saying 'b-uh', 'c-uh')



VC and CVC words

- C = consonant, V = vowel
- VC words are those consisting of a vowel and then a consonant, eg: *at, in, up*
- CVC words follow the pattern consonant, vowel, consonant, eg: *cat, dog, pet*
- Words such as *tick* or *bell* also count as CVC words; although they contain four letters, they only have three sounds



Making words

- Now the children will be *seeing* letters and words, as well as hearing them
- They will be shown how to make whole words by:
 - pushing magnetic letters together to form little words
 - Reading little words on the board
 - Breaking up words into individual sounds



Tricky words

- Your child will also learn several tricky words; those that cannot be sounded out
- Eg: **the, to, I, go, no**



Phase 3

- The main individual letter phonemes have now been learnt, and children are reading CVC words independently
- Phase 3 teaches children to learn the graphemes (written sounds), made up of more than one letter, eg: **'oa' as in boat**
- Your child will also learn all the letter names in the alphabet and how to form them correctly



Phase 3

- Read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them
- Read and write words in phrases and sentences



How can I help?

- Sing an alphabet song together
- Play 'I spy'
- Continue to play with magnetic letters, using some two-grapheme (letter) combinations, eg: *r-ai-n = rain* blending for reading
rain = r-ai-n segmenting for spelling
- Praise your child for trying out words
- Ask for a list of tricky words
- Create phonic games with a timer
- Play pairs



Don't worry if they get some wrong!

These sounds and words are hard to remember and need plenty of practice.



Phase 5 is throughout year 1 and takes 31 weeks to complete.

in this phase children will:

Read phonetically decodable two syllable and three syllable words.

Use alternative ways of pronouncing and spelling the graphemes corresponding to the long vowel phonemes.

Spell complex words using phonetically plausible attempts.

- Graphemes:
- Ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e
- Alternative graphemes for:
- l, o, c, g, u, ow, ie, ea, er, a, y, ch, ou

Year 1 phonic Screening check.

This will take place during the week beginning 16th June 2014.

The phonics screening check is a quick and easy check of your child's phonics knowledge. It helps your school confirm whether your child has made the expected progress.

How does the check work?

Your child will sit with a teacher he or she knows and be asked to read 40 words aloud.

Your child may have read some of the words before, while others will be completely new.

The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit. If your child is struggling, the teacher will stop the check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

Some of the words the children had to read last June were:

Kigh, strom, flute, shrubs, portrait

- Phase 6 is throughout year 2, the children will learn to:
- Recognise phonic irregularities and become more secure with less common graphemes.
- They will apply phonic skills and knowledge to recognise and spell an increasing number of complex words.

- Children will also be:
- Introduced to and learn about the past tense
- Investigate and learn how to add suffixes
- Learn how to spell long words
- And find and learn the difficult bits in words.

- In addition to this, each week the children learn 'tricky' spelling words. (those words that are not spelt phonetically) and key sight vocabulary.
- The key sight word list has also changed. There are now 300 words to learn. ~ 100 in Reception and Year 1 and an additional 200 in year 2.

- The children always work within the phase that is appropriate to their level of learning.
- The children are assessed regularly and groups are organised accordingly.
- Therefore the suggested model of year group and corresponding phase, does not always go hand in hand with the year group that your child is actually in.

Some Definitions

A Phoneme

This is the smallest
unit of sound in a
word



How many phonemes can you hear in

Cat?

A grapheme

These are the letters that represent the phoneme.

The grapheme could be 1 letter,
2 letters or more!!

t ai igh

- This is where it gets tricky!!
- Phonemes are represented by graphemes.
- A grapheme can consist of 1, 2 or more letters.
- A phoneme can be represented/spelt in more than one way (cat, kennel, choir)
- The same grapheme may represent more than one phoneme (me, met)

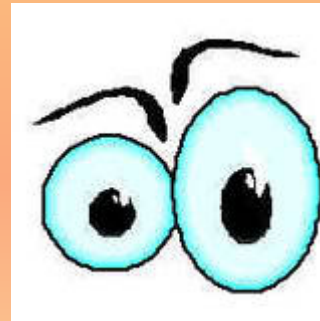
- How many phonemes are in each of these words?

| word | phonemes | | | | | |
|--------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| bleed | | | | | | |
| flop | | | | | | |
| cow | | | | | | |
| jumper | | | | | | |
| chair | | | | | | |
| pencil | | | | | | |

- A phoneme you hear



- A grapheme you see



- A word always has the same number of phonemes and graphemes!