

Reading and Writing

Things to work on that will help your child to continue to make progress with reading and writing whilst they are at home.



Top tip 1!

Talk, sing songs, read and tell stories or poetry. Make up plays. Play games. An environment rich in language makes such a huge difference to children's progress in all areas of literacy.

Top tip 2!

Try to make sure that your child is surrounded by words, and reading materials of all sorts. Put up signs round the house or leave notes for them to read. Have books, catalogues, the yellow pages, dictionaries, magazines, whatever you can think of, for them to explore. Have writing materials readily available. Ideally not just pencils and paper, but chinks, crayons, felt tips, fancy paper, notelets, stamps or stickers, pictures to inspire them and so on.

Useful resources you should have at home or can probably get easily.



- Stories, poetry and information books. Other reading materials e.g. Magazines, dictionaries, catalogues.

- Board games. Many of these involve reading.
- Writing materials e.g. paper and other things to write on ...you could use card from boxes, a blackboard or white board if you have one, the driveway (with chalk!) If you have things like fancy writing paper, notelets, shopping list pads or note books I'm sure they would love to use those.
- Pencils, pens, chinks, crayons etc
- Audio stories where they listen and read along.
- The common exception words for your child's year group. (on school web site)
- The phonic sounds your child is learning. (on school web site)
- The schools handwriting example.
- Plasticine or play dough, art supplies
- Word games like boggle or scrabble



Reading and Phonics

If you have access to books at your child's reading level, then that's great. Certainly go to the library, if it is open, and take advantage of facilities that I'm sure will be set up to help you to access these. However, learning to read is about much more than this. As ever building confidence, having fun, and helping them to be successful is vital. As is showing them that reading is something we use in everyday life.

Some ideas:-



Paired reading.

Allow your child to choose a book they are interested in and read it together. You can approach this in different ways:-

- You read the bits that are tricky for them and they read the bits they can do.
- You deliberately read words incorrectly and see if they can spot your mistakes.
- You take it in turns to read a sentences or a page, helping each other if you get stuck. Try to model how you would tackle a word you didn't know straight away e.g. by sounding out, using the picture, thinking about what would make sense and so on.
- You can ask your child to see how many of a particular word, or sound they can find, and don't forget to ask questions to help them to think about, and understand the story.

Cut up sentences

Write out a sentence from their book onto 2 separate strips of paper, read it together then you can:-

- Cut one up for them to them to reorder, matching it to the other sentence.
- Can they reorder it without looking at the original sentence?

- Can you change or add words to improve or change the sentence.



Rhyming words

Playing with rhyming words helps to develop children's auditory discrimination. You may have rhyming stories (Julia Donaldson, Jez Alborough, Dr Zuess books all tend to be rhyming stories) at home, or commercial games that you can play, but here are a few ideas:-

- Think of strings of rhyming words. How many words can you think of/ write down that rhyme with dog? etc
- Rhyming tennis, taking it in turns to say a word that rhymes.
- Make up silly sentences.

e.g. Start with

The **man** made a **plan** to drive his enormous van.

Change the words to make them silly.

The **pan** made a **plan** to drive his enormous **van**.

The **pan** made a **plan** to drive his enormous **can**.

They could draw pictures to go with them.

- Match rhyming words or pictures of those words.
- Make up rhyming sentences about a favourite character. E.g. Goldilocks washed her socks.



Learning Tricky words or phonic sounds

There are lists on the school website of the Common exception words that each year group need to learn. These are words that have tricks in them and can't be sounded out phonetically. There are also lists of the phonic sounds that the children need to learn. Your child may, or may not, be able to read the words and phonic sounds for their year group, depending on their development, so it's a good idea to get an idea of where they are with those first. Then you can help your child to work on learning the ones they don't yet know. Here are some ideas:-

- Matching pairs

Children love matching pair's games and often delight in being better at them than the adults they are playing with. You may have matching games like this at home, and they are good for memory, but you can use this idea to help them to learn the common exception words too (or numbers, or phonics). You will need to choose about 8 words. I would suggest choosing some they can already read, and some new ones. Write them out on to card, each one will need to be done twice, so there are pairs of each word. Then spread them out on the table. Each person playing takes it in turns to turn over two cards to try and find a matching pair. Read the words, as they are turned over.....together if they are new words. When they find a pair they can keep it. (Maybe you will expect them to spell it first!)

You can use these cards for a snap game too.



- Regular practise of phonic sounds

Try to go through the phonic sounds daily with your child, using the picture clues and rhymes to help them. These are key to helping them to decode words and to become an independent reader.

Encourage them to read and write real words with the phonic sounds they are learning. They can also make up 'Alien' names for their toys, or pictures of aliens they have drawn, using phonic sounds like 'broog' or 'splout'.

- Put words you want them to learn up round the house so you can practise wherever you are. I have heard that the inside of the toilet door is a good place!
- Encourage your child to spot these trick words or phonic sounds whenever they read.
- Use online games to help them to practise. See the link on the school website.

Reading everywhere

Create lots of opportunities for your child to read everywhere they go. Help them to see that reading has a purpose by showing them when you have to read e.g. to read forms and information, labels on packets, recipes, signs etc. It's also worth remembering that children who see their parents reading for pleasure tend to become avid readers themselves. So putting your feet up and getting stuck into a book is excellent for your child's education!



- Create a cosy reading area somewhere comfortable at home, make it a lovely place where your children (and you!) will want to spend time. In good weather maybe you can take your books outside to read.
- Put signs up around the house for your child to read, they could be funny, instructional or require a response. 'If you've read this you can come and get a biscuit.' Might be a popular one!
- Get them to help you to read recipes, instructions etc.
- Can they read the shopping list with you?
- Read the blurb on the films that they might want to watch.
- There are also stories to read available online.

Reading to your child

Reading to your child helps them to understand language and expands their vocabulary. Even when they can read by themselves it is still very important. Try to read a good range of things, including stories, poetry, plays and information books. Grandparents or family members elsewhere can help with this via skype or facetime, or record themselves reading stories for their grandchildren. As they get older children do enjoy chapter books, but there are lots of lovely picture books to, so make the most of those too. BBC iPlayer has ceebeebies bedtime stories you can use as well.



Writing and spelling

Try to provide lots of opportunities for your child to write. If you have lots of nice things available for them to use they will be more motivated. Again, also try to show them how you use writing in your everyday life and try to create opportunities for them to write for a purpose.

We would always remind and support the children with 'the *bear* essentials' when they write. These would include using a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence, putting a full stop (or a question mark or exclamation mark) at the end and leaving a space between each word. At school we write on lines and the children are encouraged to think about where the letters sit on the line and to write as neatly as they can. If you are unsure of the letter formation they should be using please look on the school website. Of course we would be helping the children to use their phonic knowledge and common exception words in their writing. In school they have lists of words that they can use in their writing, so this might be something that would help them at home. We encourage them to use descriptive vocabulary to make their writing interesting and to use conjunctions like and, but, so etc. to extend their sentences, so when you spot them doing these things please praise them, as this will encourage them to include these things in future writing. However, the most important thing while they are with you, is that they keep

writing and that they enjoy sharing what they have written with others.

Some ideas:-



Writing activities

- They can write letters (or even emails!) to people you are unable to see.
- Children can make their own books about something that interests them. It's amazing how motivating a few bits of folded paper can be!
- They can write shopping lists, instructions for things, recipes.
- Maybe they would like to write stories about the adventures of a favourite toy or character. They could read these to relatives or friends via video or phone call.
- They could cut pictures out of catalogues and magazines to write about.
- An 'All about me' diary or scrap book can be fun, or if they are writing about what they are getting up to day to day this could be a lovely thing to share with relatives to maintain important bonds.
- They could do all sorts of writing and pictures that could be popped through the doors of elderly neighbours. I'm sure it would make their day, and give the children's writing an important purpose.
- Get outside if you can. Make some collections to write about or label. Use chalks to write on walls or concrete. Maybe they could make a trail or a treasure hunt, with clues for others to follow.
- They could make posters or notices to put up round the house.

- You could get into the habit of exchanging little notes or letters with them, or maybe one of their teddies could start writing to them and they could write back!
- Some children will enjoy making models from construction kits and writing stories, instructions or information about them.
- Role play games can often encourage children to write. You could play hairdressers and have an appointment book, set up an 'office' at home, or even play schools!
- Your child might like to make a book called 'How to look after my pet' or 'How to be amazing at football'.



Spelling

The more often children see words the more quickly they will learn how to spell them, so one of the important ways to improve spelling is actually reading! However there are lots of other things we can do to help them.

Use the list of common exception words from the school website, choosing some words that you have noticed your child finds tricky to remember and try some of the activities below.

- Talk about the words with your child. Where are the tricks or surprises? Sometimes it helps to highlight these.

- Have a go at 'Look, say, cover, write, check'. First you look at the word, then you cover it up (or turn it over), say the letters in the word, write it down, and then look to check how many letters you got correct. Do this about five times before you go on to the next word.
- Choose a few words and get your child to hunt for those in a book. Each time they see one of those words they can write it down....how many of each word did they find?
- Write letters of a word onto lego blocks and get your child to put the pieces into the right order.
- Use scrabble letters to spell words, or find some stones, paint letters on them and use those.
- Use plasticine or playdough to make the word.
- Use different colours or mediums to write the words.....paint, chalk, cooked spaghetti!



Gross and fine motor control

Some children will particularly benefit from working on their motor skills, so if your child has problems with coordination, and/or struggles with handwriting here are a few ideas to try.

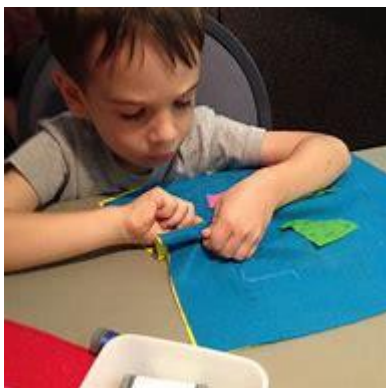
- Get outside and practise throwing and catching, skipping hopping, bouncing, balancing along a line etc.

- Encourage them to pursue activities that demand fine motor control e.g. jigsaws, Hamma beads, construction, sorting small



objects, peg patterns.

- Get them busy with painting and other arts and crafts.
- Colouring and drawing, join the dots and tracing are all good for developing fine motor control.
- Use plasticine, play dough or clay.
- Use water bottles and go outside to squirt letters onto the ground.
- Use chalk outside.
- Lacing cards are good or, If you have suitable needles, you could try some simple sewing.
- Make necklaces by threading pasta or straws onto string.
- Cutting and sticking.



Other ideas

Read to the cat, the dog, a cuddly toy a sibling

Create a book corner and out side, rug etc