



Phonics

Home Learning Guide

A guide to how your child is learning to read and write in reception and what you can do to help at home.

PHONICS

Dear parents and carers,

Your child is learning to read with **Read Write Inc. Phonics**, a very popular and successful literacy programme. This booklet should give you a bit more information about how we teach phonics to Reception children, as well as some hints and ideas for how you can help your child at home. Please note, this is a brief overview for your information rather than a compulsory home-learning programme. It is designed simply to involve everyone at home with what we are doing in the classroom and to enable you to continue your child's learning in the home environment if you would like to. Above all, it should be fun, so we hope that you enjoy it too! Please don't hesitate to ask any of us if you have any further questions.

How will your child learn to read?

Firstly, your child will learn to read:

- Set 1 Speed Sounds: these are sounds written with one letter:
m a s d t i n p g o c k u b f e l h r j v y w z x and sounds written with two letters (your child will call these 'special friends'): sh th ch qu ng nk ck
- Words containing these sounds, by sound-blending,
e.g. m-a-t mat, g-o-t got, f-i-sh fish, b-e-s-t best, s-p-l-a-sh splash
- Blending Books and Red, Green and Purple Storybooks.

Secondly, he or she will learn to read:

- Set 2 Speed Sounds: ay ee igh ow oo oo ar or air ir ou oy
- Words containing these sounds
- Pink, Orange and Yellow Storybooks.

Thirdly, he or she will learn to read:

- Set 3 Speed Sounds: ea oi a-e i-e o-e u-e aw are ur er ow ai oa ew ire ear ure
- Words containing these sounds
- Blue and Grey Storybooks.

1. Help your child read the Set 1 Speed Sounds

Before you get going, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkXcabDUg7Q> to practise saying the sounds clearly. The more clearly you say the sounds, the quicker your child will learn them.

Important: We say 'mmm' not 'muh' and 'lllll' not 'luh' when teaching the sounds. This really helps children when they learn to blend sounds together to read words.

Your child will bring home the Set 1 Speed Sounds cards

You'll see that each sound is drawn in the shape of a picture. For example:

- 's' is in the shape of a snake
- 'd' is in the shape of a dinosaur
- 'a' is in the shape of an apple
- 'm' is in the shape of two mountains.



Using the Set 1 Speed Sounds cards

The name of each picture is written on the back of the cards.

1. Ask your child to say the name of the picture on the back of each card, e.g. a-a-a-apple, ssssnake, getting quicker each time.
2. Help your child to say the sound hidden behind each picture, e.g. 's' is behind the snake. Repeat until your child can do this quickly.
3. Help your child to say the sounds on the letter side, getting quicker each time. If he or she forgets, turn back to the picture side. When your child can say the sounds without turning over to check, increase the speed!

2. Help your child to read words

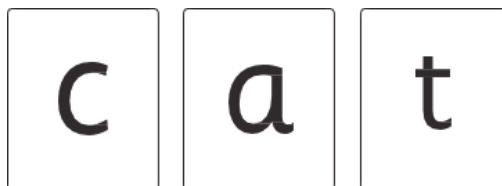
Once your child can read Set 1 Speed sounds confidently, he or she can learn to read words. First, your child will be introduced to a toy frog called Fred. Fred can only say sounds in a word and needs your child to help him read the word. So when you hear your child say 'Fred Talk' you'll know that this means sounding out the word.

Fred says the sounds and
children work out the word.



You can help your child to read words by following these steps:

1. Make up a word with three cards that your child can read quickly, e.g. c-a-t.

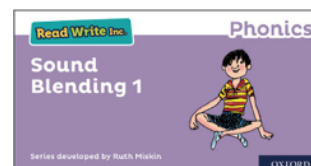


Point to each card and say the sounds, and then say the word. Ask your child to copy you. Muddle up the cards. Ask your child to make the word again, and then point to and say the sounds. Repeat with more 3-sound words, including some containing sounds made up of more than one letter, e.g. ch-a-t, sh-i-p, th-i-s.

2. Put out three cards. This time, ask your child to say the sounds. Help him or her to blend the sounds into the words, until your child can do it without your help.
3. Repeat with some 4-sound words, e.g. b-l-i-p, f-r-o-g, g-r-i-n, s-t-o-p, j-u-m-p, h-a-n-d, b-l-a-ck.

3. Help your child read the Sound Blending Books

Ask your child to read each word in sounds (Fred Talk) and then say the word. Then, he or she can turn over and check if they're right.



4. Help your child read the Storybooks

As soon as your child starts to read the Read Write Inc. Phonics Storybooks in school, he or she will bring home a Book Bag Book. This book builds upon the ideas and many of the words in the Storybook he or she has just read. Your child will need support in reading this book.



A brief explanation of how to follow the activities is included in the books.

How to listen to your child read

- Do not read the book aloud before your child reads it to you.
- Ask your child to read the sounds and words before he or reads the story.
- When your child reads the story, ask him or her to sound out the words that he or she can't read automatically. Don't allow your child to struggle too much. Praise your child when he or she succeeds.
- Read back each sentence or page to keep the plot moving. (Your child's energy is going into reading the words, not the story.)
- Do not ask your child to guess the word by using the pictures.
- Do it all with patience and love!



What else can you do at home?

Read stories to your child with feeling! The more you love the story, the more your child will love reading.

Rhyming songs and games

Playing with word sounds and singing rhyming songs really helps your child to hear the different sounds in words. For example, making up nonsense words that rhyme with names or familiar objects is a good way of supporting your child's sounds. It may sound silly, but it's something everyone can join in with and it's great fun!

Recognising letters

Handy hints for recognising letters: - Playing 'I spy' with printed materials such as newspapers, books or comics can help children recognise starting sounds in unfamiliar words. - When you are out and about, encourage your child to pick out letters/sounds that they know from signs, place names, supermarket aisles, menus, car plates, etc.

Recognising sounds

Playing games such as '**I hear with my little ear, something starting with.....**' can really help children to pick out the starting sounds of familiar words. As they become more confident they can begin to segment the whole word into individual sounds, e.g. c-a-t and f-i-sh. It is important that sounds practiced in isolation reflect the sounds we hear in whole words. For example, 'p' rather than 'puh' and 'rrr' or 'mmm' rather than 'ruh' or 'muh'. It is really helpful when you're reading with your child if you encourage them to say the sound that they can see rather than spelling out the letters, as it is blending the sounds together that enables them eventually to read whole words.

Reading Activities

Engaging children in stories helps with understanding the purpose. Try using puppets or teddies to retell the story, or act out scenes together and talk about what happens next. You can even make your own puppets with lolly sticks!

Writing at home

Giving children opportunities and purpose for writing at home, without forcing them, will help to reinforce their learning in the classroom. Here are some simple things you can do to support your child:

- Ask for help writing shopping lists or messages
- Encourage them to write their name on any work that they do
- To increase confidence, use whiteboards or magnetic letters which can be easily erased
- Make cards or address envelopes to post to friends or family and help your child to write a message or address
- Children love post-it notes! If you leave some lying around the house you'll soon find little messages stuck all over your house! (Sainsbury's Basics post-its are less than 30p)
- Encourage your child to write a caption with pictures that they draw. You can always write in yellow pencil, or dots for them to trace over to build up confidence
- Magnetic letters on the fridge or radiator can really encourage your child to experiment with arrangements of sounds
- Have a 'Writing Book' for your child to record their ideas and just 'have a go' at mark-making. It helps them feel grown up!

Handwriting

It is really important that children begin to form letters correctly as soon as they start writing. There are lots of ways to improve confidence and work on handwriting at home.

All mark-making, or 'pretend' writing should be encouraged—it is a great way of building confidence and practicing holding a pencil.

Practice gross motor formation (large scale) to build confidence in letter formation. Try using big paintbrushes and water with a splash of food colouring on the wall or floor. Or write letters in the air with ribbons on sticks or sparklers.

Sprinkle a fine layer of coloured sand or flour on a plate and use fingers to practice writing letters.

It helps if you can encourage your child to write lower case letters rather than capitals, except at the start of names. This is what they will be seeing in the classroom.

If your child lacks confidence to have a go, you can always write in yellow pencil, or dots for them to trace over.

Fine motor control Building up strength in little fingers can be 'hidden' in fun, daily activities:

- Cotton bud painting (99p store cotton buds and Sainsbury's paint!)
- Weaving (wrap wool around an old shoebox and weave everything from strips of plastic bag to leaves and grasses from the park)
- Lego, Meccano or other small-scale construction kits.
- Playdough (find a recipe online and store it in the fridge).