

Maidensbridge Primary School



Learning Through Play



Supporting Early Reading at Home

Sentence Games

This activity is quite useful when your child has been given an early reading book. Parents and Carers are often concerned that their child has memorized the story rather than reading the words. This can happen! Some children become over-dependent on the picture clues and do not look for clues from the words. Playing sentence games can help to overcome this problem.

Making Sentences

Read the book with your child so that they are familiar with the story. Then simply use the first sentence from the reading book and copy it out on to a strip of paper. Now cut up the sentence into the individual words. For example:



Ask your child to make the sentence, "This is a dog" using the individual words. At first, they will probably need a little help. When they have made the sentence, ask your child to read it to you and encourage them to point to each word with their finger. A maximum of 4 sentences per book would be sufficient for this activity.

Retain interest by only spending a few minutes a day on the activity. Ask your child to read the sentence and any mistakes will often be self-corrected. If not, you can give clues such as, "What sound does *dog* start with?" If your child is still unable to read it, say positive comments such as "What a good try. You got all these right and only this part wrong. Well done." Then show your child the correct order.

'What does it start with?' Box

You will need:

- ◆ A box
- ◆ Several items each beginning with a different sound
- ◆ Corresponding letter cards

This game is similar to the common objects game on the previous page, but the emphasis now is on recognising the sounds that the letters make. Ask your child to choose an object from the box, identify the initial sound (remember it is the sound you are looking for rather than the alphabet name) and then match the object with the relevant letter card.



Sensory Tray or Finger Paints

Children enjoy writing letters with their fingers in a sensory tray of sand, rice or lentils. Writing letters with finger paints is good fun too! Both methods provide the perfect opportunity for the children to practise correct letter formation.



Learning to read

It is vital that early reading experiences are happy and positive. The aim should be not just for children to learn to read, but to enjoy reading.

At home, you can help your child become interested in reading in the following ways:

- Listen to them read every day.
- Read to them as often as possible.
- Talk about the book they are reading.
- Encourage them to draw/ play events in a story *e.g. creeping through a forest.*
- Ask questions *e.g. What is your favourite part of the story? What might happen next?*
- Read a range of texts *e.g. recipes, newspapers, comics.*
- Visit the library.

The Sounds of Letters

Tips for practising sounds with your child:

- ♦ It is important for a child to learn lower case or small letters rather than capital letters at first. Most early books and games use lower case letters and your child will learn these first at school through the Letters and Sounds programme. Obviously you should use a capital letter when required, such as at the beginning of the child's name, *eg. Paul.*
- ♦ When you talk about letters to your child, remember to use the letter sounds: **a buh cuh duh e ...** rather than the alphabet names of the letters: **ay bee see dee ee.** The reason for this is that sounding out words (blending) is practically impossible if you use the alphabet names. **eg. cat, would sound like: see ay tee.**
- ♦ When saying the sounds of **b, d, g, j** and **w** you will notice the 'uh' sound which follows each, for example buh, duh... You cannot say the sound without it, however, try to emphasise the main letter sound to create a purer sound that will be easier to blend.

Playing Reading Games

Playing reading games can be a fantastic way to support reading, whilst protecting a child from feelings of failure. By 'playing together' both adult and child feel relaxed. Where a child could feel pressured in a formal teaching situation he/she will usually enjoy reading activities in a 'play' situation. This leaflet aims to give you simple ideas to try!

Sound Games to Play at Home

Common Objects

Collect several objects that begin with the same sound and make a card with this letter sound on it. Make a second group of objects beginning with a different sound and a card to go with those.

Talk about the sounds of the letters on the two cards with your child and shuffle the objects. Separate the cards on the floor and ask your child to put each object near the sound that it starts with. This activity can help your child to "hear" the first sound of a word.

The Odd One Out

Say a number of words, all but one of which begin with the same sound. See if your child can pick out the odd one. It can be helpful to have the corresponding objects there for the child to look at.

I-Spy

For small children the usual way of playing I spy can be too difficult- 'I spy with my little eye something that begins with' You can make this easier by providing a clue for instance 'I spy with my little eye something that barks and begins with d'.

Sound Scrapbook

Write a letter at the top of each page of a scrapbook. Concentrate on a few sounds at a time and encourage your child to collect pictures of objects that begin with those sounds and stick on the appropriate pages. Try to avoid using example words where the first sound does not make its normal sound such as in giraffe.



Games for Recognising Letter Shapes

Fishing for Sounds

Fishing for sounds is a fun way for your child to recall the sounds that they have learnt. You will need a few cards with individual letters written on them and a paper clip attached to each. Then your child can fish for sounds, using a small stick with a string and magnet attached. If your child can say the sound of the letter, they win the card, otherwise you win it. You can also play this game with words!

Sequencing the Letters in your Child's Name

Providing the individual letter cards for each letter of your child's first name can be a useful way to teach the sequence of letters. Remember you will need to write a capital for the first letter and lower case for the rest.

Show your child how to make their name first, before shuffling the cards for them to have a try. For a very long name work with the first few and build up a letter at a time.