

## **Supporting Phase 1 Phonics at Home**



Early phonics skills aren't about learning what letters look like; that is best left for Reception. The early skills which will support your child to learn to read when they start school are:

- The ability to differentiate sounds in their environment. For example, the difference between and sneeze and a cough.
- The ability to make different sounds and sound patterns with their voice. For example, 'nee / naw /nee / naw'.
- The ability to identify words which rhyme, and those which start with the same sound.
- The ability to blend sounds together to work out the word.
- The ability to break up (segment) a word into its component sounds.

There are some activities you could do at home as a fun part of your daily family life, that will support these skills.

### **Reading Together**

Reading together is one of the easiest and greatest ways to support early phonics! By tracking the text with you finger you demonstrate that we read from left to right, and top to bottom. Encourage them to turn the pages themselves, or take turns to develop their fine motor skills. Reading exposes children to a wide range of vocabulary, and don't be afraid to look up any unfamiliar words together to explore meanings. You can also ask questions such as 'what do you think will happen next?' or 'how do you think this character is feeling?' to help them develop the skills of inference and empathy.

### **Go on a Sound Walk!**

When you are walking anywhere, take a moment to stop and see what sounds you can hear. Stop for 30 seconds every now and again and see if they can correctly identify things such as a bird singing, a police siren, a dog barking, wind in the trees etc.

### **Copy Me**

Imagine visiting a park and what noises you could make with your voice to represent each piece of play equipment. For example, climbing up the steps on the slide and 'wheeee' going to down. Get your child to copy you, and take it in turns to make up voice sounds to copy.

### **What noise do I make?**

When you are playing with your child, ask them what noise a toy would make. For example, what noise does a train / car / horse / dinosaur / cat make?

### **Rhyming**

Regularly share a book with your child and point out, or ask your child to tell you, which words sound the same or rhyme. You can also ask them to suggest their own word that rhymes as you read to them. This could be a real or a made-up word, as long as it sounds the same! Julia Donaldson is a great author for this.

### **Alliteration** (words that start with the same sound)

During conversations with your child, ask them what sound a word or name starts with, and whether they can think of another that starts with the same sound. You can make up fun, alliterative sentences together. Again, this word can be real or made up, and you can suggest words if they can't think of any. For example, 'what sound does Sarah start with? What other words start with a 's'? Silly, sandwich, Sarah!' Remember it needs to be the same sound, not the same letter! For example, 'ship' would not work in this sentence.

## **Guess that word!**

Ask your child to get something, but break the word up into its different sounds and see if they can guess what you want. For example, 'go and find the c-a-t' Or 'where is your c-oa-t?'

## **Chop it Up!**

When talking to your child, ask them what sounds are in specific, simple words. For example, 'what sounds are in the word dog? Yes! d-o-g'. This is a difficult skill but will really help them with spelling in the future.

## **Supporting Early Maths at Home**

Maths is now taught differently in UK schools, following what is called a 'mastery' approach. This means that the curriculum is designed to help children develop a deep and adaptable understanding of mathematical concepts and number. This means that what they learn in the Early Years, will help them during maths lessons in formal schooling, but will also help them solve problems in real life situations.

### **Counting**

Including counting whenever you can in your everyday activities. Ask them to count how many objects up to 10 first. They need to understand that they can only count each object or action once, using one number name. You can count anything – toys, steps, claps, fish fingers!

### **Patterns**

Encourage children to notice and create patterns in everyday life, for example zebra crossing stripes, lines down the middle of the road, or stripes on a scarf or tie. They can also create their own patterns in their drawings or paintings, or with natural materials outside such as leaf, stick, leaf, stick.

### **Shape**

Notice and name shapes in the environment, but also during their play. Can they stack a cylindrical block in their wall as easily as a rectangular one? Why not?

### **Problem Solving**

It can be so easy to jump in and help your child when they are struggling with something like building a tower or completing a jigsaw. However, guiding their thinking and allowing them to 'figure it out themselves' will develop a far greater understanding of maths. Questions such as 'what could you do here? How could you get that to fit? Could you try it a different way?' will promote problem solving skills and confidence in their own ability.

### **Number Hunt**

As they get older, asking children to spot numbers as you go for a walk is a great way to promote numeral recognition. Start with 0, 1, 2, 3 and slowly extend as they gain more confidence.

### **Subitising**

This is the skill of knowing 'how many' something is showing without having to count each 'thing' individually. The children will know it as using their 'fast eyes'! You can do this with almost anything and it helps them develop fluency in mathematics. [This](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zsjbcmn#) article will help you understand more about this skill and why it is so important to developing mathematical ability <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zsjbcmn#>

**If you would like any other ideas about how to support your child's learning at home, then please ask any Little Apples staff and we will be glad to help.**