

Early Reading: Tips for helping your child with letters and sounds

Early Reading:

Developing **listening skills** is really important in order to **identify sounds**. One of the methods of learning how to read is: to break words down into their separate sounds first e.g c-a-t.

Before a child starts to identify letter sounds, it helps to be able to recognise general noises in the environment.

Listening games:

- Environmental sounds at home - stop and listen; identify sounds you can hear e.g clock ticking; fridge humming; computer whirling
- Environmental sounds outside – stop and listen; identify sounds you can hear e.g birds singing; traffic; dog barking; wind blowing
- Instrumental sounds – use a blind fold or close you eyes what instrument can you hear e.g drum; rattle; sleigh bells; xylophone

(or make your own instruments e.g 2 spoons hit together; spoon on saucepan; scrunch up a crisp packet; rice in a pot shaker; pasta in a pot shaker)

- 'Me then you – Clapping game' – clap a simple rhythm and ask your child to copy you; change rhythms

Letters & Sounds

When teaching your child the letters of the alphabet; name the letter and say the sound it makes, then give examples.

For example 'This is 'A' (aye) and the sound it makes is 'a' for apple, ant, ambulance.'

Ensure the examples you give are accurate as the English language is sometimes confusing. For example 'giraffe does not have the letter sound 'g' but 'j' so avoid this!!

The sound of the letter is the smallest unit of sound you hear within a word. So try not to 'fuh'/'muh'; instead say 'ffff'/'mmm' .

When you get to 'x' this is a tricky one. Pronounce it as 'ks'. It is taught as an end sound of a word (e.g fox or box).

We use the Phonics Song and The Letter Song (found on 'you tube') to help teach letter sounds. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saF3-f0XWAY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyKdUpJQBTY>

Letter Sound games

- Letter Sound Hunt – decide what letter you are working on. Write down the letter and carry it round the house saying the sound it makes. Collect items you find that start with that letter sound or draw pictures to represent them if they are too big. e.g bin, ball, bed, balloon, box, bear.
 - Silly sentences – make up alliterations (words that start with the same letter sound) e.g seven silly sausages sitting still
- N.B It doesn't even have to be proper words it could be nonsense e.g 'nicky nacky noo'
- Naming the sound – say a word and ask what sound it begins with. For example 'ball starts with..... b'.

Choose letters that are relevant to your child e.g letters that are in their own name. Then move on to letters that are at the start of family and friends names.