

Before your child begins to read

Children should learn to hear and experiment with sounds through play! When a child is playing they are fully involved in their learning.

Phonics gives children the opportunity to orally segment and blend sounds in words, experiment with making sounds and being able to distinguish between different sounds.

Segment: is when you split a word up into its sounds (phonemes), you are ‘sounding it out’.
Eg. cat would be c-a-t.

Blend: is when you say the sounds (phonemes) together to make a word, you are pushing the sounds together.
Eg. d-o-g (segment) dog (blend).

Another aspect that is important is encouraging a child’s interest in books and reading! Experience shows that children benefit hugely by exposure to books from an early age.

“Right from the start, lots of opportunities should be provided for children to engage with books that fire their imagination and interest. They should be encouraged to choose and peruse books freely as well as sharing them when read by an adult. Enjoying and sharing books leads to children seeing them as a source of pleasure and interest and motivates them to value reading.”

(Taken from Letters and Sounds Phase 1 Information Booklet)



20 Things
to do
Before Your Child
can read

1: Take your child outside on a listening walk – sit in the garden, the park, the beach, at home, on a beach. What can they hear? Can they distinguish between the sounds they may hear in different places?

2: Take a spoon or any beater and go on a drumming session outside, can you gather items together and listen to all of the different sounds you can make when you drum. Experiment with different drumming beats etc.

3: Make a shaker using different types of container. Fill it with bits and bobs from around the house.

4: Does your child have a favourite sound? Can you copy each other's sounds? My favourite sound is the sound of waves crashing.

5: Story time: Read a familiar story book and change voice for different characters. Use loud, quiet, soft, hard voices.

My favourite stories for making great character voices and sounds are below. You don't need to buy books, you can join your local library and borrow books for FREE!

6: Learn and sing familiar songs and rhymes (if you don't know any, Google some or even better have a look on Youtube). This old man, Old Mc Donald, Twinkle

Twinkle, Incy Wincy Spider etc.

7: Play 'adjust the volume' - can you make different sounds with your voice. Eg: eeeeeeoouuuuu, oooooaiaaaaaaa. Adjust each other's voice to loud & quiet. Even try a squeaky voice. whee, boing, oh, ssss, shshsh, mmmooo, oooooo, chchchch, zzzzz, and tick tock.

8) Play hide and seek but follow your voice as you answer, or even better use a musical instrument and hide. The child should follow the sound of the instrument

9) Peek a boo instrument. Gather some instruments (make them together using bits and bobs) Play the different sounds until you become familiar with them, take turns closing your eyes, play an instrument, get the child or yourself to guess which instrument has been played.

10) Make different sounds using parts of the body. Demonstrate using the body to make different sounds (clap hands, stamp feet, click fingers).

11: Discover your favourite rhyming story or poem..

12: Make a large bowl of rhyming soup – can you find items from around the house that rhyme? Put these into your rhyming soup bowl. It can be anything. "I'm mixing a key, some tea and a pea into the bowl". Try and add an item that doesn't rhyme! Can you sort the odd one out?

13) Play I spy! "I spy something beginning with a" Don't say the letter name, say the sound the letter makes.

14) Mirror mouth movements – study the way your mouth moves when you make different sounds.

15) Robot voice – gather some items together. Can you pretend to be a robot and 'sound them out'. E.g. you place a clothes peg on the table, in a robot voice sound out p-e-g. Even better, make a robot mask out of some tin foil and really go for it.

d-o-g

dog

16: If you have a smartphone, record different family members talking, can your child figure out who it is?

17: Glass bottle flutes – a classic! Fill bottles with water (different amounts) and play glass bottle flutes by blowing across the top or even use a spoon to play it as a xylophone.

18: Spot the intro – use YouTube to play some of your child's favourite songs, rhymes, tv themes. Can they guess what it is?

19: Fill in the blanks – sing a familiar song or say a familiar rhyme/story – can your child fill in the missing blanks when you stop?

20) My favourite one! Build a den (inside or outside) and use it as your story den! Make up a story about absolutely anything! Gather some family photos together and make up a story about a fantastic journey.

Let your imagination take over and make up a story with witches, wizards, superheroes, dogs, cats, hens, mice, run away thumbs or worms, the list is endless!