

Activities to Support Phonics and Early Reading Skills



Letter and Sound Discrimination

This is the ability to be able to see/feel, identify and name the different letters and know the difference between them by how they are written (grapheme). Children also need to be able to hear the difference between how letters sound (phoneme)

Activities to support identifying letters & sounds

- For children with residual vision - Write large letters (or digraphs e.g. **ai, oi, oa, th, ch, sh, igh, ow**) onto pieces of paper with a dark pen. These can then be used for a range of games.
 - Memory matching game
 - Snap
 - Hide and seek
 - Bury in sand, find and say
 - Lay the letters on the floor and using fly swats (or wooden spoon), say a letter for your child to swat.
- To give real and tactile experiences, choose a letter (or 2 or 3 letters) and find objects in the house that start with that letter or give a group of objects to be sorted to match the correct letter/sound.
- Dye rice with food colouring, tip onto a plate or tray write letters in the rice with your finger or a pen.
- Make letters using Playdoh (use Playdoh dots to make Braille)
- Play I Spy in your home or with picture books. For children with no/very limited vision, get them to think of items as well as collect them from around the home.
- There are many board games to support phonics available.



With these activities choose a small number of letters and build up so it is not too cluttered, keep colour contrasts high e.g. dark pen on white/light paper. VSSS can provide Braille/Tactile resources.

Free login to 

www.teachyourmonstertoread.com – a fun adventure game to teach phonics/reading

Word Reading

Reading involves using phonics to sound out letters and blend to read words e.g. sh-o-p = shop

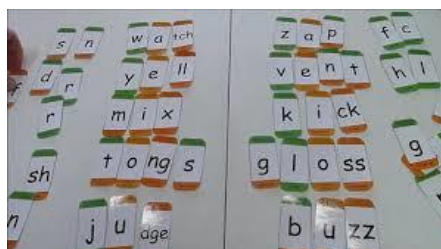
Reading words by sight/touch (reading the word and knowing it).

Reading a word in a sentence because it makes sense.

To ensure, for those children with residual vision, their vision needs are met make sure print is dark (pen or printed) and enlarged to a suitable size.

Activities for word reading

- Hide and seek type games as listed above.
- Move letter cards around to make words.
- Make large word targets using empty boxes – read and shoot with a nerf gun!
- Write words then draw around them to see their shape, identifying tall letters, short letters, similarities and differences between words.
- Play with how words sound, find rhyming words with the word you read.
- Choose a word and find that matching word in a book. How many of those words can you find?



Sharing Books

Develop a love of reading by sharing stories, poems or information books. It is important that the size of print is big enough to prevent visual fatigue and ensure your child can access what they are reading.

These websites allow you to access books online or download them. The books can then be enlarged on screen or your device will read it to them.

Libby – <https://www.overdrive.com/apps/libby/>

The National Accessible Library - <http://www.accessiblelibrary.org.uk/>

RNIB Bookshare - <https://www.rnibbookshare.org/cms/>

Oxford Owl - <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

Kimberlee Charlton, Virtual School Sensory Support IT Skills trainer can support you with accessing these websites. kimberlee.charlton@norfolk.gov.uk