



**Early Years
Phonics
Toolkit**

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The importance of phonics

“Being able to read is the most important skill children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being”
(Letters and Sounds, 2007)

“The independent review of the teaching of early reading’ (Rose, 2006) found that high quality phonics work should be the prime means for teaching children to read and spell words. It highlighted the importance of developing speaking and listening skills from an early age in order that children are ready to get off to a good start in phonics work. It also stressed the need for this to be set within a “broad and rich language curriculum.”
(Letters and Sounds, 2007)

Developing language in your setting

Before children are ready to read and write words they need to develop their spoken skills, by hearing, understanding and using a wide range of vocabulary. The number of words children are exposed to from birth to five varies hugely. Studies have shown that those children who have been exposed to a more limited range of vocabulary are less likely to achieve well at school and this may limit their future life chances. For those children it is particularly important that early years settings try to close this word gap by introducing new words to children every day. It has been estimated that by age 6 children have a vocabulary of around 14,000 words. This means that between ages 2-6 they need to learn around 8 new words a day, either at home or in their setting. Try to introduce new vocabulary every day, through children’s play and activities. Remember to include action words and describing words as well as nouns. Introduced words will occur spontaneously during your interactions with the children, but should also be planned for.



Top tips for supporting children to understand spoken language

- Get the child's attention before speaking to them – use their name and wait for eye contact, get down to their level, minimise other distractions (visual and noises)
- Be aware of the complexity of the language you use with the child – you may need to simplify the length of the sentence, the grammar or the vocabulary
- Pause between sentences to allow the child to process the information
- Order your sentences logically – for instance saying 'Put your coat on before you go outside' is easier to follow than 'Before you go outside, put your coat on.'
- Consider the language used when asking children not to do something. Negatives are more difficult for some children to understand. For instance say 'walk please' rather than 'do not run'.
- Use pictures, objects, gestures and real life experiences to help explain new words
- Encourage children to tell you when they do not understand
- Vary the intonation of your voice to make it more interesting to listen to.
- Make activities short, frequent ... and fun!



Your learning environment

Provide opportunities to develop phonics in all areas of continuous provision:

- Water - lots of opportunities to make sounds with different objects
- Role play - explore alliteration - can you make me some sizzling sausages, listen to them hiss. Join children in their play, sing songs and rhymes such as 'Polly put the kettle on'
- Music area - making up songs, rhythms, rhymes, sing to the beat
- Construction area - pictures of nursery rhymes to sing eg London Bridge
- Small world - animal noises, vehicle noises
- Book area – selection of books that involve sounds and noises (e.g. Bear Hunt, Whatever Next) and rhyming books, nursery rhyme prop bags available.

Group size - Phonics does not have to be delivered to large groups. For some children who need additional challenge or extra support this is best done in a small group when activities can be adapted/extended.

Planning - Not all phonics opportunities need to be planned for. It is vital to make use of incidental opportunities to develop phonic skills throughout the day, for example

- Listening for sounds
- Lining up – ask children to line up if their name begins with a certain sound
- Encouraging children to stop and listen during the day and describe what they can hear.
- When wanting children to stop what they are doing clap a rhythm - until all children join in. Alter the rhythm and increase the complexity.
- Put activities/resources out for children to return to independently after they have been introduced during an adult led activity. Note and observe what the children do.

You may wish to use the audit provided in Appendix 3 of this toolkit to help you to develop your learning environment's potential for supporting children's language and phonics.



Modelling listening and speaking

- Listen to encourage talking – try not to interrupt or answer questions for them. Children need extra time to process language and decide how to respond. Try to allow them 10 seconds to respond before you speak.
- Model good listening - show you are interested in what the children say, make eye contact, stop what you are doing, comment, repeat, expand or ask a question.
- Provide a good model of spoken English. Speak confidently and clearly. When stressing phonemes it is important they are said correctly (see link in Appendix one to articulation clip) in order that they make sense when blended/segmented.

Pre-school phonics – Phase 1

Many schools use commercially available phonics schemes. Most of these are aimed at Reception age upwards. Some schemes have developed nursery versions. If the children in your setting transfer to a variety of schools it may be confusing if you begin to use a scheme that is not supported by their school. The Letters and Sounds programme (DfES 2007) is free and the phase 1 section contains lots of ideas of appropriate activities for pre-school age children and younger, no matter what scheme they go on to use in school. The activities are divided into 7 aspects which help children develop a variety of speaking and listening skills. Children need to develop these skills before they are ready to begin more structured phonics in Reception. Many children will need to continue to develop these skills throughout Reception and key stage 1. Phase 1 phonics activities should continue to be provided for these children alongside the other phases. You will need to provide a wide range of activities to help children to tune into sounds, listen and remember sounds and talk about sounds.

Fun phase 1 phonics ideas

Aspect 1 - Environmental sounds

To develop listening skills and awareness of sounds in the environment, identify and recall them, talk about them using simple sentences.

- Listening walks – talk about things good listeners need to do (keep quiet/still) Stop and listen for sounds, discuss what sound they can hear and what is making it. Make a list (words or drawings) to represent your walk, or record the sounds on a phone. Use the list to help children remember your walk once back in the setting
- Animal sounds – describe farmyard animals, eg ‘This animal is pink, with a curly tail’ and get children to name it and then make the animal’s noise. After a few examples, the children could have a turn at describing an animal. This could also be played with zoo animals, transport etc.
- Sound effect stories – get children to add the sound effects to stories you read or tell. Alternatively you could start with a range of sound effects and the children could help you make up a story using them.



- Hidden sounds - provide range of sound making materials, e.g. newspaper to scrunch, tear or waft, water to splash, pour or blow bubbles in, pan to bang, scrape or stir. Child hides behind screen whilst adult or other child makes a noise with one of the materials. Hiding child has to say what material was used to make the noise and also what they did to make the noise. Encourage child to use words or imitate sound to describe noise heard. This activity is quite challenging as it requires the child to remember the different sounds that one resource makes.
- Kitchen sounds - provide an assortment of kitchen resources in mud kitchen or indoors and encourage children to see how many different noises they can make using – metal pans, wooden bowls, woks, pan lids, wooden spoons, whisks, plastic spatulas. Talk about the sounds. Do they all sound the same? What words can be used to describe the sounds made. Encourage the children use simple sentences to describe the noises they hear, e.g. the pan lids crash!
- Homemade sound lotto. Either inside or outside ask the children to make or listen for a sound they like. Record sound onto a talking tin or phone and find a picture or photograph to represent the sound. Make sound lotto cards with the pictures. Alternatively put the pictures up in different places inside or out. Play the sounds one at a time and children walk, hop, skip, run to the matching picture. Discuss the sounds they hear. Do they like the sound? What does it make them think of? Can they describe the sound they hear?
- Odd one out. Provide the children with three recorded sounds to listen to, e.g. vacuum cleaner, microwave pinging and a dog barking. Children to identify what the noises are, which one is the odd one out and why.

Aspect 2 - Instrumental sounds

To experience and develop awareness of sounds made with instruments and noise makers, appreciate the differences, talk about the sounds using a widening vocabulary.

- All sit in a circle. One child is given an instrument to play. A blindfolded child stands in the middle. The child with instrument begins to play and the blindfolded child has to walk towards the person playing their instrument and tap them on their shoulder when discovered.
- Choose three instruments or sound makers eg pan hit with a stick, plastic bottle filled with rice, two metal spoons tapped together. As a group children to decide an action for each sound. Adult makes the sound, the children respond with the correct action. Extend by altering the speed with which instruments are hit, children to move faster or slower accordingly.
- Listening bottles/pots – pairs of opaque pots filled with same materials, shake and listen, can you match them up? Materials which could be used might include pasta, rice, sand, talcum powder, dried pulses, stones and gravel.
- In a circle - inside or outside- sitting or standing- adult makes a sound or pattern using the instrument - pass the instrument around for children to copy the sound. Extend the activity by making the sound into rhythms which maybe more complicated or make the sounds a certain volume - loud or soft - at the end discuss the quality of sound produced.
- Hide several instruments outdoors. Give the children a description of the instrument and the sound it makes. Children have to hunt for the instrument, e.g. I am round and when you shake me I go ting, ting, ting. I am near the big tree. What do you think I am? Can you find me?
- Orchestra conductor – children have an instrument each (real or homemade). When you raise your hands they must play louder, when you lower them they must play softer. Thumbs up is the signal to play, hand open is the signal to stop. Children must alter their sound according to your signal. Once they have got the hang of this they can take turns being the conductor. You could also add signals for playing faster/slower.



Aspect 3 - Body percussion

To develop an awareness of sounds and rhythm, to distinguish between sounds, remember patterns of sounds and talk about them.

- Action Songs, for example (to the tune of Bobby Shaftoe)...
“Clap your hands and wiggle your fingers, (x 3)
Now we’ve made a pattern.”

Swap clapping and wiggling for other actions. Children can make their own up, for example...

“Tap your knees and blink your eye-lids, (x3)
Now we’ve made a pattern.”

- Add body percussion sounds to nursery rhymes, performing the sounds in time to the beat. Change the body sound with each musical phrase or sentence.
- In pairs children can stand opposite each other and make up a sequence of body sounds for the other child to copy, for example;
Child 1 - clap, clap.....Child 2 repeats back
Child 2 - stamp, stamp, clap.....Child 1 repeats back
- Have 3 sets of cards –
ACTION words, such as clap, slap, stamp, click, tap, rub, pound, shuffle, flap
TEMPO (speed) words, such as slow, very slow, fast, lazily, quickly, hurriedly
DYNAMICS (volume) words, such as softly, quietly, noisily, very quietly, extremely loudly. Children choose one card from each set and then perform the action in the manner dictated by the cards.
- Outdoor action games – Make pebbles or cards with actions on. Children can order the pebbles/ cards to make their own tune.



Aspect 4 - Rhythm and rhyme

To develop an awareness of rhythm and rhyme in speech, to recognise and talk about words that rhyme and produce rhyming words

- Syllable games. Compose rhythms using themes e.g. Christmas:

Santa - San-ta this has two claps, as it has 2 syllables
Elf - Elf has one clap, as it has one syllable

Introduce in a small group by having lots of identical pictures of Santa and lots of identical pictures of individual elves. Demonstrate how to say Santa and clap the rhythm when shown the picture. Repeat for elf. Place a selection of six/eight pictures in a row. Point to each picture and encourage the children to clap the rhythm and say the word at the same time, e.g. . . “Santa, Santa, Elf, Elf, Santa, Santa, Elf, Elf.”

Rearrange the cards to make different patterns, e.g. “Santa, Elf, Santa, Elf, Santa, Santa, Santa, Elf.”

Provide children with sets of small pictures in pots to select and make up their own rhythms. These can be recorded by sticking the pictures into little grids. Encourage children to play rhythms to each other and play one another’s. Instruments can be used to play their rhythms. Other themes can be used to make up rhythms to eg. food, animals, vehicles,

- Moving to the beat - Provide lots of opportunities for children to move to the beat of the music so that they can feel it- marching, skipping etc. March and move to well-known nursery rhymes.
- Rhyming Books. Share lots of books which rhyme. Once the children know the book well ask a puppet to read the rhyme and omit a rhyming word and encourage the children to tell the puppet what it is.
- Rhyming Bags. Collect sets of pairs of rhyming objects/pictures- mouse/house, fox/box, wig/pig, hat/cat, dog/frog, spoon/moon. Have brightly coloured gift bags available so that the pairs can be found and put together in bags. Introduce a few rhyming pairs at a time and play as an adult directed game, gradually increasing the number of rhyming pairs. When children are competent allow to access in continuous provision. Alternatively hide objects in sand or outside for children to find and match up.

- Using nursery rhymes. Change the first line e.g. “Humpty Dumpty has a big house. Humpty Dumpty saw a
- Nonsense rhymes – provide lots of opportunities to make up silly rhymes e.g. “Chitter, chatter let’s all n.....”

Aspect 5 - Alliteration

To develop an understanding of alliteration, to distinguish between different sounds at the beginning of words and explore how different sounds are articulated.

- Make collections/ hunt for objects which begin with the same phoneme/sound. Use backpacks or sparkly bags to collect the objects into.
- Put small objects starting with the same phoneme into a clear plastic bottle fill with coloured water. Encourage children to say what the objects are and make the connection that they all begin with the same phoneme/sound
- Sing/say rhymes on regular basis, drawing children’s attention to the initial sound. Make up silly rhymes using children’s names in the group e.g. “Jolly Jake jigs in jelly.” “Singing Sam sweeps up sweets”
- When asking children to join a group or line up, get their coat etc, use alliteration Jolly John, Laughing Lisa.
- Children to make up their own silly rhymes about themselves using their initial sound. Initially this might just be Happy Harry which can then be extended to Happy Harry hops, Happy Harry hops in hoops
- Sing rhymes and songs which have alliterative lines such as ‘Sing a Song of Sixpence’. Play with jingles (e.g. Can you count the candles on the cake?) or tongue-twisters to help to tune children’s ears to the relationships between the sound structures of words. Ultimately children need to be able to isolate the initial phoneme from the rest of the word, e.g. to be able to say that sausage begins with s.



Aspect 6 - Voice sounds

To distinguish between the differences in vocal sounds, including blending and segmenting, to explore speech sounds and talk about the different sounds we can make with our voices.

- Use talking tins to record the children’s voices. Place alongside photographs of the children. Children have to match photograph to their voice recording
- Experiment singing a favourite nursery rhyme in a high pitched voice like a mouse, low voice like a bear. Children to firstly select picture card for nursery rhyme or a prop out of a bag followed by taking a soft toy /picture out of a different bag to provide the animal they are going to sing like. Extend by adding ghost like voices (very wobbly) or a robot (short and clipped).
- Sing Boom Chicka Boom rap (call and response chant)...

“Say Boom Chicka Boom” (you call)
 “Say Boom Chicka Boom” (children echo)
 “Say Boom Chicka Boom” (you call)
 “Say Boom Chicka Boom” (children echo)
 “Say Boom Chicka Rocka Chicka Rocka Chicka Boom” (you call)
 “Say Boom Chicka Rocka Chicka Rocka Chicka Boom” (children echo)
 “Hah ha” (you call)
 ”Hah ha” (children echo)
 “One more time” (you call)
 “One more time” (children echo)
 “Like a mouse (you call in a high pitched squeaky voice)
 “Like a mouse” (children echo in a high pitched squeaky voice)

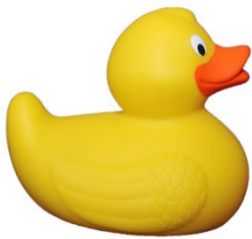
Repeat whole chant in a high pitched voice as above. Then change last line, e.g. “Like a (witch/ghost/ very posh/very slowly/very softly etc)”

- Provide a selection of resources for children to talk into which will distort their voices, for instance - microphones which make voices echoey, pringle tubes, drain pipes, buckets of water to dip piping into.
- Read stories eg Three Bears, Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Bear Hunt, Jack and The Bean Stalk encourage children to use voices according to characters.
- Make up a story – have a variety of props which would encourage children to make appropriate noise as they are added to the story eg bell ‘ting- a ling’, keys ‘clink clink’, pair of wellingtons ‘splish, splash’, toy car ‘brmm, brmm’, toy train ‘choo choo’, cat ‘meow’, clock- tick tock.
- Play games where children use their voices in different ways and explore a variety of sounds. Give opportunities for children to discriminate between the different voices they have when singing, speaking, shouting, whispering, growling, squeaking, etc. Show them how to make their voice go down a slide - Wheee! , bounce like a ball - Boing, Boing, shout in terror - ahahahahah! or hiss like a snake - ssssssssss.
- Play a hiding game with different children using their different voices. Can the listeners guess who it is?
- Use picture cards of animals. As each card is held up ask the children to make the sound of the animal with their voices.

Aspect 7 - Blending and segmenting

To develop oral blending and segmenting of sounds in words, to listen to phonemes within words and remember the order in which they occur, to talk about the different phonemes that make up words. These are the most difficult of the phase 1 phonics skills for children to understand and usually only children in their pre-school year would be able to grasp this.

Oral Blending - This is when the individual phonemes/sounds are put together to make the word. For example if you put the sounds c-a-t together they make cat, the sounds ch-i-p make chip. Children need to be exposed to oral blending a lot as this is a difficult skill which they need to help them learn to read.



d-u-ck



c-a-t

- Pack the bag. Place a selection of objects (not more than three to start off with) in a shopping basket/ jazzy bag/box. With a puppet leading the game bring each object out and tell the children what it is so for example the puppet brings out a mug and you say “ A mug m-u-g, mug”Repeat for each object “hat h-a-t”, etc. Once the objects are on the floor for all children to see then explain that the puppet needs to pack his bag so he is going to say the sounds in the word for one of the objects and they have to guess which one it is. If the child chosen gets it right put the object into the bag. Repeat the process until all the objects have gone. To make the game more challenging put objects into the bag which start with the same initial phoneme.
- Sound-talk toys. Introduce a soft toy/robot that can only speak in ‘sound-talk’. The adult asks the toy a question, such as “What would you like for snack today?” The toy whispers into the adult’s ear and the adult repeats out loud “ch-ee-se...oh you want cheese.” As the children become more confident try making some mistakes to see if they correct you. (A toy is better than a puppet as we want the children to focus on your mouth to see the sounds being articulated clearly, rather than looking at the puppet’s movements)
- Give the children instructions using sound talk, as part of your daily routine, for instance “Get your c..oa..t”, “put the bricks in the b..o..x”.

- I spy. Place on the floor/table a selection of objects with names containing 2-3 phonemes (e.g. hat, cup, boat) Check all the children know the names of the objects. Say for instance “I spy with my little eye a h-a-t” and choose a child who says the name of the object and holds it up.
- Treasure hunt. Hide objects around the room and ask the children to go and find a particular object, giving them the clue in a segmented form, the child has to blend the sounds/phonemes to guess the word. Eg. “Go and find a p-i-g.” Once the child has found the object and brought it back they can be encouraged to sound talk it and practice segmenting it.

Oral Segmenting

This is the opposite of blending. The word is split up into its component sounds. It is important to teach children how to orally segment words as this helps them to learn to spell.

- Play the ‘Pack the bag’ game as above, but this time children have to choose an object, and sound out it’s phonemes, before they can put it in the bag. Ask the children to put one finger up for each phoneme they say.
- Tell the children that the Sound-talk toy you are using can only understand words that they ‘sound-talk’ to it. Get the children to tell the toy things or give it instructions, for instance say “Shall we tell X (toy’s name) where we are going today?” and choose a child to say “the p-ar-k”. Build these types of activities into your everyday routines and interactions with the children.
- Leave the sound talk toy available for the children to access within their continuous provision, so that they can practice ‘sound-talking’ to it within their play.

Working with parents

A range of websites are included in the in Appendix 1 which contain ideas on how parents can support their children to develop their phonic skills at home. You may wish to include some of these ideas in your induction pack or give to parents when their child reaches a certain stage. This can help parents to support their children in ways that compliment what you are doing at nursery.



Supporting children with English as an additional language

Be aware there may be some cultural differences that influence family communication, for instance in some cultures it is considered impolite to maintain eye contact with strangers/elders. When using animal sounds, such as meow/woof remember these are the English versions and may not be the same in other languages. Some children with EAL may be delayed in their understanding and use of English initially. For all of these reasons it is important that you try to get as much information as possible from their families about the child's use of language at home and about any other cultural differences. See Appendix 1 for further resources.



Moving on – Phase 2 phonics and beyond

Most aspects of phase one phonics will have been introduced throughout a child's time in their early years setting, from an early age. Activities around blending and segmenting are generally more appropriate for children in their pre-school year. Some children may be ready to move onto phase 2 phonics whilst in their pre-school/nursery year. This is a decision for the setting to make. If a child attends a PVI setting or childminder it is a good idea to discuss with a child's future school how they teach phonics, in order that children do not have to 'unlearn' things and to avoid possible confusion for the child.

Most children will begin phase 2 phonics as soon as they start in Reception. There is no requirement that children should have mastered all the skills in Phase one (e.g. the ability to supply a rhyming word) before beginning phase two. It is an expectation that schools work through phase two and three phonics with the children at a fast pace so the more experience children have with phase one skills, the better prepared they will be. The skills and activities of phase one should continue to be revisited as necessary, even whilst children are working on other phases of phonics.

Points to consider when beginning phase two phonics

- Phonics planning should be relevant to the group you have and differentiated as appropriate for the children in your class
- It is important that children have the opportunity to independently practise what you have taught! This will set further challenge for the more able children.
- If we want our children to use their phonics in provision it is important that we are providing them with a language rich environment in which they can 'try out' their phonic knowledge. Are there signs and words in the environment that contain the phonemes that you have taught them? Are there lots of inviting writing activities throughout the provision? Do the children have access to phonic resources in the provision to assist them e.g. phoneme frames, letter strips etc.?
- Careful consideration needs to be given when setting out phonic activities/games as part of your continuous provision. Without an adult present children will not be checked or corrected if they muddle up phoneme/grapheme correspondence. If you use phonic activities/games initially as adult directed activities and then leave them out for independent use children will be able to consolidate their understanding. However it is important that practitioners check the children's understanding regularly in order to formatively assess children's phonic knowledge and inform appropriate next steps.

Glossary of Terms

Grapheme - a grapheme is a letter or sequence of letters that represents a phoneme. A grapheme can consist of one, two, three or four letters, for example 'b'.. 'th'.. 'ear'.. 'aigh'

Phoneme - a phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word.

Blending - blending is recognising the letter sounds in a written word, for example c-u-p, and merging them in the order in which they are written to pronounce the word 'cup'.

Segmenting - segmenting is identifying the individual sounds in a spoken word (e.g. 'him' = h - i - m) and writing down letters for each sound to form the word.

Phase Two

Many schools teach phases 2 – 6 using purchased schemes. Others follow the free Letters and Sounds programme published in 2007 by the DFES (see resources list). These schemes may differ in the method and order in which phonemes and graphemes are introduced.

In phase 2 children are introduced to:

- The concept that phonemes are represented by graphemes
- Nineteen phoneme-grapheme correspondences
- Blending and segmenting to read/spell simple words

Generally graphemes are introduced in sets for children to blend to read and segment to spell. In the Letters and Sounds programme these sets are

- Set 1: s a t p
- Set 2: i n m d
- Set 3: g o c k
- Set 4: ck e u r
- Set 5: h b f, ff l, ll ss

In phase 3 children are taught a further 25 graphemes including digraphs (a phoneme made up of 2 letters, such as th or ck) and trigraphs (a phoneme of 3 letters).

Children will still need to be provided with experiences from all aspects of Phase One when they have moved onto Phase Two and beyond.

Phase Two Phonics within continuous provision

Sand

- Make and laminate large 'Trash and Treasure' coins for use in the sand. Children sort the coins into 'real' and 'nonsense' words. (Use words suggested in the appropriate Phonic Phase). Children could then list the words they find.



Wheeled Toys

- Use wheeled vehicles to practise correct letter formations of singular letters.

Water Tray

- Write appropriate letters/words on ping pong balls, rubber ducks, plastic Christmas baubles or milk bottle tops with a permanent marker. Children then use small sieves or fishing nets to catch and read the letters/words on the objects. If providing words use words that comprise of one syllable eg cat, dog, pop, shop, chip, in, at. Tricky words—I, go, to, the, no could be included as well.

Foam letters/Sparkly letters

- Provide children with foam in a tray and model how to correctly form a letter. Encourage the children to have a go. Put letter cards out next to the foam for children to choose their own letter and have a try at forming it correctly. Provide a tray filled with glitter and a string of fine sparkly beads for the children to manipulate to form letters.

Painting

- Use sponge letter stampers to practise writing words using recently learnt graphemes.
- Paint words using glittery/textured paint

Sticking

- Challenge children to make word collages of appropriate tricky words, by cutting out and sticking, letters from old magazines.
- Give children cards with a selection of letters on and ask them to cut out from old magazines objects starting with that initial letter.
- Print out a large set of letters of the alphabet and get children to decorate them with a wide range of different textured/coloured materials, to make a touchy/feely letter display for the classroom.



Playdough

- Give children playdough and encourage them to make the graphemes that they have been learning in phonics, by rolling and shaping the dough.
- Encourage children to use letter cutters to cut out and spell tricky words.

Messy Play

- Encourage children to practise writing new graphemes/tricky words into dry flour; lentils; rice; glitter; sugar; gloop; shaving foam; custard powder or paint.
- Hide objects and letters in whipped soap flakes; jelly; shaving foam or Gellibaff. Challenge the children to match the object with its initial letter.
- Challenge the children to write specific graphemes/words by arranging cooked, oiled spaghetti.



Phonics Outside

Give children the freedom to take any phonics resources you use inside, outside. These could be put in a treasure box or vegetable trolley for easy access.

- Set up treasure hunts using letters, words, pictures for the children to find and record on a clip board.
- Provide a post box and encourage children to write letters to each other.
- On fine days, tape large pieces of paper to the floor for children to write on using a range of implements or run a roll of paper the length of the outdoor area.
- Paint letters of the alphabet on stones/shoe boxes/shells for children to order or provide duplicates so they can use them for simple word building.
- Spread tyres round your outdoor area, write a grapheme/word on each tyre with chalk. Get children to move in different ways to music. When the music stops they stand in a tyre and try to say the grapheme/read the word on it.



Don't forget to continue lots of Phase One activities too!



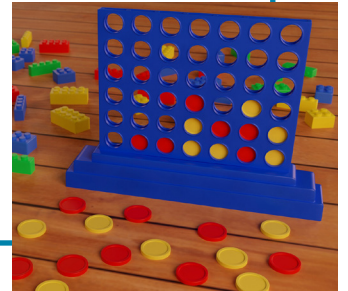
Phase two/three phonics games

Phonics Fishing- Recognition

Make a pretend sea; this could be a piece of blue fabric or paper. You will also need a boat and a fishing rod. The boat could be a cardboard box and the fishing rod could be a stick, string and magnet tied to the end. Lay letter sounds out in the sea. The children will have fun saying the letter sounds that they catch!

Phonics Connect 4 - Recognition

This is a great game to reinforce letter recognition. Put a letter sticker on each Connect 4 counter. Each time they add a counter the child has to say the letter sound.



Paper Cups Word Building Games - Blending for reading

Write sounds on the bottom of paper cups. Draw around these cups onto a large sheet of paper or card. Adult writes letters inside the circles on the card to make a word. Child can find the cups to build the word and sound out as they build the word. Blend the sounds to read the word.

Hopscotch - Recognition

Hopscotch has been around forever, but don't forget that some of the best phonic games come from the simplest of ideas. It is very adaptable too. Simply add letters to the squares with chalk for recognition to add cvc word to encourage blending.



Police investigation - Blending for reading/ reading captions

Set up a role-play situation this can be done indoors or outdoors. The children can play police detectives. They read either captions or words on the given paper and find the objects. E.g. cap, hat, map etc. This activity can be adapted to read captions too.

Musical Chairs - Blending for reading

Have cvc or ccvc words on chairs to match children's ability. When the music stops, children find a chair to sit on. Can they blend the letters to read the word?

Wash the Word - Blending for reading

Adult to write words on the ground using chalks. Listen to the word, find it and wash it away. This is great for early blending practise. This game can be easily adapted. Why not try the game using tricky words or even numbers!

Gotcha! - Blending for reading

You will need fly swatters and pictures of a mix of simple cvc and more complex objects. The adult 'sound talks' one of the pictures and a child has to blend the word and splat that picture!

Phonics Twister - Blending for reading

Write CVC words on the twister spots. As children place body parts on the spots they can blend the sounds to read the word. You could also play this with single letter sounds or digraphs.

Secret Messages - Reading captions

The adult writes a caption using a white crayon or candle. The child then paint over the message to reveal a short caption. Each child can have their own special message aimed at their own level.



Appendix 1 - Useful websites

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1.html>

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1-games.html>

<https://www.phonicsbloom.com/uk/game/list/phonics-games-phase-1>

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/Phase1Menu.htm>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/letters-and-sounds/phase-1/phase-one-activities>

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/Search.aspx?q=rhyme>

Lucy Sanctuary, Speech & Language therapist and CBT Practitioner specialising in autism
<http://lucysanctuary.com/>

Letters and Sounds – gov.uk website:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds-principles-and-practice-of-high-quality-phonics-phase-one-teaching-programme

or via the foundationyears.org.uk website:

www.foundationyears.org.uk/2011/10/letters-and-sounds-phase-1/

“Independent review of the teaching of early reading” - Final Report, Jim Rose, March 2006:
<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5551/2/report.pdf>

Getting parents involved

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/what-are-phonics-phases>

Cumbria County Council – Home Learning and Time Together at Home

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/homelearning/homelearningandtimetogetherhomepage/homelearningandtimetogetherhomepage.asp>

English as an additional language

Cumbria County Council - Developing good EAL practice in the EYFS

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/earlyyearsandchildcare/earlyyearsandchildcare.asp>

Appendix 2 - Recommended books

Practitioners Books

Helping Young Children With Phonological Awareness— Ros Bayley and Lynn Broadbent
Literacy Outdoors—Ros Bayley, Helen Bromley, Lynn Broadbent
Challenge Phonics— Practical Active Phonics Learning— Helen Driscoll
High Low Dolly Pepper— A & C Black
Bingo Lingo- Helen MacGregor
Bobby Shaftoe, clap your hands— Sue Nicholls
Singing Phonics Phase 1—Helen MacGregor
Singing Phonics Phase 2— Helen Mac Gregor
Three tapping Teddies— Kaye Umansky
Tickle My Nose—Kaye Umansky
Wiggle My Toes—Kaye Umansky
The Little Book of Games with Sounds—Sally Featherstone
50 Fantastic ideas for teaching Phonics—Alistair Bryce-Clegg

Children's Books

Rhythm and Rhyme books

Each peach pear plum— Janet and Allan Ahlberg
Pumpkin Soup— Helen Cooper
Aliens in Underpants save the world—Claire Freedman and ben Cort
Who's in the Loo?
Ten Little Ladybirds— Melanie Gerth and Laura Huliska– Beith
Ten Wriggly Catterpillars— Debbie Tarbett
Puff the magic Dragon—Peter Yarrow, Lenny Lipton
The Gruffalo , The Gruffalo's Child, Room on the broom, What the Ladybird heard, Superworm ,
Chocolate Mousse for Greedy Goose -Julia Donaldson
The Snail and the Whale– Julia Donaldson/Alex Scheffler
Tanka Tanka Skunk—Steve Web
Doing the Animal Bop– Jan Ormerod and Lindsey Gardiner
Don't Put Your Finger in the Jelly Nelly—Nick Sharratt
Where's my teddy, My friend Bear– Jex Alborough
Down by the cool of the Pool—Tony Mitton
Incy Wincy Spider—Keith Chapman
Party Animals—Tony Mitton
Giraffes Can't Dance—Giles Andreae
The Foggy Foggy Forest—Nick Sharratt
Hairy Maclary—Lynley Dodd
Whoosh around the Mulberry Bush—Jan Omerod
Big Red Bath—Julia Jarman
Big Blue Train—Julia Jarman
Over on the Farm—Christopher Gunson

Appendix 3 – Phase 1 phonics audit for Preschool/Nursery

Phase One falls largely within the Communication and Language and Literacy areas of learning in the Early Years. In particular, it supports linking sounds and letters in the order in which they occur in words, and naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. It also draws on and promotes other areas of learning for example, Expressive Arts and Design, where music plays a key part in developing children's language. Whilst Phase One contributes to the provision for Communication and Language and Literacy it does not constitute the whole language provision.

The activities in Phase One are mainly adult-led with the intention of teaching young children important basic elements of the Letters and Sounds programme such as oral segmenting and blending of familiar words. However, it is equally important to sustain and draw upon worthwhile, freely chosen activities that are provided for children in good early years settings and school nursery classes. The aim is to embed the Phase One adult-led activities in a language-rich provision that serves the best interests of the children by fully recognising their propensity for play and its importance in their development.

Phase One activities should be fun, multi-sensory, engaging and well-paced and should not involve young children being expected to sit for extended periods of time. Learning should take place indoors and outside using high-quality resources, with well-trained practitioners who are able to differentiate opportunities to meet the needs of all children. Group size and organisation should be considered and adapted, depending on the activity/ children's needs.

All seven aspects need to be considered (and the three strands within them), but these should be seen as on-going, integral aspects of Communication and Language and not something to tick off after a short focus. If later in the pre-school year some children are ready to move on to Phase Two, the planning and delivery of this must be considered. At this point partnership with schools which children will move to is beneficial. Phase One activities should continue even if Phase 2 is also started.

	In place and working well (tick as appropriate)	Partially in place (tick as appropriate)	Area for development (tick as appropriate)	Comments
Staff knowledge and attitudes				
Practitioners working in pre-school have a good understanding of phase 1 of letters and sounds and its specific aspects.				
Practitioners understand that aspects 1-6 can be taught in any order and dipped in and out off and regularly consolidated, but that aspect 7 should come after aspects 1-6 have been introduced.				
All practitioners have previously accessed training or CPD in relation to teaching phonics.				
Practitioners are confident in using the correct terminology associated with phase 1 phonics.				

	In place and working well (tick as appropriate)	Partially in place (tick as appropriate)	Area for development (tick as appropriate)	Comments
Children’s curiosity in letter shapes and written words is fostered throughout Phase One to help them make a smooth transition to Phase Two.				
Practitioners are confident in the phonetic alphabet and using/ modelling appropriate ‘clipped’ sounds.				
Practitioners value the importance of teaching phase 1 phonics and understand the need for children to have a secure knowledge of this before moving on.				
Practitioners share a love of books with the children and introduce them to a range of authors/ genres.				
All practitioners are happy to sing and share stories and rhymes with children.				
Partnership with parents				
Practitioners share with parents their approach to teaching phonics.				
Opportunities for home learning are regularly shared with parents.				
Resources to consolidate learning are shared with parents, for example rhymes and songs.				
Practitioners are willing to model activities/share knowledge for/with less confident parents.				
Phase 1 – specific aspects				
Aspect 1 – General sound discrimination - environmental				
Children are frequently encouraged to listen to and identify sounds around them, both indoors and out.				
Children are supported to find/use words to talk about sounds they hear.				
Children are regularly encouraged to play games which include listening to/ identifying sounds.				
Children explore how sounds can be made using a range of found/natural materials, both indoors and out.				
Practitioners join children in their play to extend their talk and enrich their vocabulary.				
Aspect 2 – General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds				
Children are able to access/explore musical instruments in provision as well as during planned activities.				

	In place and working well (tick as appropriate)	Partially in place (tick as appropriate)	Area for development (tick as appropriate)	Comments
A good range of quality instruments are available in the setting and the children are taught how to use these.				
Opportunities are provided for children to play instruments to accompany songs, stories and a range of types of music.				
Activities are planned where children match or replicate sounds made by adults with instruments.				
Opportunities are provided for children to make and use their own musical instruments.				
Children are specifically taught to play a range of simple rhythms.				
Aspect 3 – General sound discrimination – body percussion				
Daily opportunities are provided for children to join in with singing and action rhymes.				
Children are encouraged to explore the different sounds they can make with their bodies and voices.				
Regular opportunities are included for children to move to a range of different beats.				
Aspect 4 – Rhythm and rhyme				
Daily opportunities are provided to explore rhythm and rhyme, through songs, stories and rhymes.				
Children are supported to build rhyming strings, make up rhymes and add in missing rhyming words.				
Regular opportunities are available for children to clap out and count syllables.				
Practitioners are confident at making up/changing rhymes to share with the children.				
Aspect 5 – Alliteration				
Opportunities are provided for children to find/match objects with the same initial sound.				
Children are taught to hear/recognise the initial sound in their name and in other words.				
Fun opportunities to build alliterative strings and identify alliteration in spoken phrases are introduced and revisited regularly.				
Books are provided which include lots of alliterative rhymes and jingles.				

	In place and working well (tick as appropriate)	Partially in place (tick as appropriate)	Area for development (tick as appropriate)	Comments
Practitioners model the use of alliterative sentences when playing alongside children, for example in the role play area.				
Aspect 6 – Voice sounds				
A wide variety of opportunities are used to help children start to differentiate between different voice sounds.				
When playing alongside children, practitioners encourage vocal sounds to be used in the play.				
Regular opportunities are promoted for children to act out stories and to add sound effects.				
During sensory/ messy play practitioners introduce new words and sounds to describe experiences.				
Aspect 7 – Oral blending and segmenting				
Practitioners can confidently segment words into their component sounds, and blend the component sounds all through a word.				
Practitioners regularly write in front of the children and sound the phonemes as they record the grapheme.				
Children are encouraged to sound talk the phonemes they can hear in simple regular words.				
Practitioners sound talk words for children to blend regularly once children are at this stage.				
Children are encouraged to talk about what they write and to ascribe meaning to marks.				
Observation, assessment and planning				
Practitioners provide daily speaking and listening activities that are well matched to children’s developing abilities and interests, drawing upon observations and assessments to plan for progression.				
All practitioners have access to the original National Strategies Letters and Sounds document.				
A system is in place for observing children, listening to them and noting their achievements so practitioners are well placed to judge how well children are doing and to plan next steps.				

	In place and working well (tick as appropriate)	Partially in place (tick as appropriate)	Area for development (tick as appropriate)	Comments
Children experience regular, planned opportunities to listen carefully and talk extensively about what they hear, see and do.				
Planning is in place which identifies which aspect is currently a focus, along with details of specific activities which will be used.				
Phonics across provision – indoors and out				
Opportunities to consolidate learning across the day are regularly exploited by staff, particularly during transition times and as part of the everyday routine.				
Practitioners are aware of the opportunities for language development through children's play, and link learning from the Letters and Sounds programme with all seven areas of learning.				
Children can access books and print across all areas of provision including outside.				
Practitioners understand the link between phonics and mark-making and this is promoted on a daily basis as well as resources being provided across provision as well as outside.				

