



Helpful hints for
supporting your child's
learning at home!



Supporting Your Child At Home: Communication, Language and Literacy

- **Make time to listen to your child – talk** to them as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, and bedtimes.
- **Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones** - and really listen.
- **Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** – look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.
- **Make a collection of different toy creatures** – e.g. a duck, a snake, an alien – say the sound it might make as you play together, e.g. ‘quack-quack’, ‘sssssss’, ‘yuk-yuk’, and encourage your child to copy you.
- **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.
- **Sound-talking**
Find real objects around your home which have three phonemes (sounds) and practise ‘sound talk’ –first just let them listen, then see if they will join in, e.g.
‘I spy a p-e-g – peg’
‘I spy a c-u-p – cup’
‘Where’s your other s-o-ck – sock?’

Magnetic letters

Buy magnetic letters for your fridge, or for use with a tin tray.

Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

Making little words together

Hide the letters around the house and then make little words together, e.g. *it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met, pick.*

As you select the letters, say them aloud: ‘a-m – am’, ‘m-e-t – met’.

Don’t forget the writing box!

Spelling is harder than reading words – praise, don’t criticise. Little whiteboards and pens, and magic boards are a fun way for children to try out spellings and practise their handwriting.

Your child might be trying to write using letters from their name – this shows that they know that writing needs real alphabet letters.

Using their whole body

For handwriting children need to be well co-ordinated through their whole body, not just their hands and fingers. Games which help co-ordination include throwing balls at a target, under arm and over arm, and bouncing balls. Also skipping on the spot, throwing a Frisbee, picking up pebbles from the beach and throwing them into the sea. Have fun!

- **Hand and finger play**

Action rhymes such as *Incy wincy spider*, *One potato, two potato*, and *Tommy Thumb* are great fun and get their hands and fingers moving.

Playing with salt dough or clay really helps strengthen little fingers, as does cookery and using simple tool kits.

- **Hand-eye co-ordination**

Pouring water into jugs and cups of different sizes, sweeping up with a dustpan and brush, cutting, sticking, tracing, threading beads, completing puzzles, peeling off stickers and sticking them in the right place – these all help hand–eye co-ordination.

- **Pencil hold**

The ‘pincer’ movement needs to be practised – this is important as they try holding a pencil confidently as they write. Provide them with a kitchen tongs and see if they can pick up small objects. Move on to challenging them to pick up smaller things with chop sticks and tweezers, e.g. little cubes, sugar lumps, dried peas, lentils. Ask children to peg objects to a washing line.

- **Enjoy and share books together** – buy or borrow books from friends, family or the library that will fire their imagination and interest. Read and re-read those they love best.
- **Make time to read with your child throughout their time in school** – PLEASE continue reading to your child even when they are reading independently. This is very important – your child needs to practise their reading skills every day, and needs the support of an interested adult. A grandparent, older brother or sister can help.
- **Read with your child** – begin to ask your child to attempt unknown words using their phonic skills and knowledge. Their phonic skills will develop more as the term goes on. Please don't hurry your child, take their lead. Encourage them to **blend** words when appropriate. Blending is where your child says the sounds (phonemes) within the word and links them together e.g. c-a-t cat, sh-i-p ship.
- **Tricky Words** – these are high frequency words which can not be sounded out phonetically e.g. the, was, what. Please encourage your child to memorise these words by sight. Encourage your child to look for clues in the word to help them eg. Was (you can hear the w and s)
- **Talk about the meaning of the book** – take time to talk about what is happening in the book, or which things they found really interesting in an information book. Discuss the characters and important events. Pictures are there to help the children. Try encouraging your child to use the picture and look at the initial sound in order to identify the word. Readers use a range of strategies to decode texts. These are modelled in the classroom on a daily basis.
- **A quiet area with some cushions and toys** is a comfortable place for you and your child to look at a book together.

Magic writing boards are great fun for children – both little and larger versions. It won't be long before they will be trying to write their names!

Write with your child – 'think aloud' so they can hear the decisions you are making as you write. Make sure the writing is for a purpose, e.g. a birthday message, a shopping list, an address.

Talk about the words they see in everyday life: food packaging, signs in the supermarkets, captions on buses and lorries, messages on birthday cards and invitations.

Write a shopping list together.

Send an email to a family member or a friend – your child says the message, you write it!

Provide your child with a shoe box full of things to write with – writing tools of various sizes and thicknesses: gel pens, crayons, glitter pens, rainbow pencils, old birthday cards, coloured paper, sticky tape to make little books. Rolls of wallpaper can be attached to a table or wall and provide a large canvas for their writing and drawing.

Supporting Your Child At Home: Mathematics

- **Model counting with your child** – as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, and bedtimes – anytime! Model counting forwards and backwards in 1s, 2s, 5s and 10s.
- **Recognise Numerals in the environment** – take all opportunities to recognise numerals on doors, down the street, remote controls, telephones etc. Number hunts around your house or garden, can they put them in the correct order?
- **Simple Sorting** – use opportunities such as tidying up or laying the table to model sorting objects by function. Talk to your child about why you are sorting the objects and how.
- **Model Mathematical Vocabulary** – when playing with your child, model the correct vocabulary. For example, when using construction or different objects use the correct terminology for different shapes and model their properties such as “I am using this triangle for the slanted roof.” Get children to estimate how heavy or light the shopping bag will be and why.
- **Playing Games:** Any dice games are fantastic for adding and subtracting activities. Can the children add the spots together and move the correct number of spaces? Other games such as snakes and ladders, cribbage, darts, dominoes that depend on numbers, counting, calculation and scoring.

- **Card Games:** Simple games like snap help children to recognise numerals and get involved with simple adding and subtracting games.
- **Take time to cook with your child** – Cooking is great for helping your child get to know simple weights and measures. An old-fashioned set of balance scales is ideal. Count out spoonfuls of ingredients. Let your child help you set the timer and count down to teatime!
- **Money** - Talk about pocket money with your child. Help her to add it up week by week, and work out whether she can afford a particular toy or treat. Shop using money and calculate change.
- **Patterns** - Be creative! Ask your child to look out for patterns and shapes on floors, wallpaper, plants, animals, and buildings - anything from the arrangement of tiles in the kitchen to the markings on the cat. Draw objects made entirely of triangles, rectangles or squares: make 'butterfly' pictures by painting on one half of the paper and folding it over so that the image is mirrored. Make mobiles by suspending objects from coat hangers and ensuring they balance.
- **Time** - Look at clocks, both digital and analogue, these are great for recognising numerals.
- **Calendars and dates** - make a timeline that includes the birthdays of each member of the family and work out how far apart each one is. Use different units: months, weeks and days, even hours, minutes and seconds. Add other important events, such as a family holiday, and encourage your child to count down to the big day.

We hope that you find these ideas useful. Please remember to look at the Curriculum Newsletter each half term and read the weekly information sheets for more tips and ideas to help support your child at home.