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## **Phonics – A parent’s guide.**

Phonics is recommended as the first strategy that children should be taught in helping them learn to read.

### **So, what exactly is phonics?**

Words are made up from small units of sound called *phonemes*. For example, cat is made up from three units of sound c-a-t. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes (sounds) that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words.

### **In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:**

#### **GPCs**

This stands for grapheme phoneme correspondences. This simply means that they are taught all the phonemes (sounds) in the English language and ways of writing them down (*graphemes- which are the letters*).

#### **Blending**

Children are taught to be able to blend. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This skill is vital in learning to read.

#### **Segmenting**

Children are also taught to segment. This is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes (sounds) that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.

## **Sounds are taught in phases.**

**Phase 1:** concentrates on speaking and listening skills. Singing rhymes, developing vocabulary, talking about the sounds that can be heard. Orally segmenting and blending. c-u-p is cup.

### **Phase 2:**

**The following sounds are taught in this order in phase 2.**

s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, ur, h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

**The following words are introduced in phase 2: Children need to be taught to recognise these words by practicing reading them, and writing them down, each day.**

no, go, to, I, into, the

### **Phase 3:**

**The following sounds are taught in this order in phase 3.**

j, v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu, ch, sh, th, ng, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

**The following words are introduced in phase 3: Children need to be taught to recognise these words by practicing reading them, and writing them down, each day.**

he, she, we, me, be, was, you, they, all, are, my, her

**Phase 4:** The aim of this phase is to revisit all the sounds from phase 2 and phase 3 and then use them to build words for their writing. For example: w-e-n-t went, h-e-l-p help, s-t-o-p stop etc

**These additional words are introduced in phase 4:**

said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

### **Phase 5:**

Some of the sounds in the English language can be represented in a variety of ways. For example the long a sound can be represented in these different ways: ai, ay, a\_e. In phase 5 the sounds are taught in this order:

ay (**day**), ou (**out**), ie (**pie**), ea (**sea**), oy (**boy**), ir (**girl**), ue (**clue**), aw (**saw**), wh (**when**), ph (**phonics**), ew (**blew**), oe (**toe**), au (**haul**), ey (**money**)

a\_e (**came**) e\_e (**these**) i\_e (**like**) o\_e (**bone**) u\_e (**rude**)

**These additional words are introduced in phase 5:**

Oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, could

### **The structure of a phonics lesson:**

During a phonics session, which is roughly 20 minutes per day, children are introduced to a new sound. The structure of each session is to: recap sounds already learnt; teach a new sound; practice the new sound; and then apply the new in writing.

Children need to see how the sound is written (grapheme) and what it would sound like when spoken (phoneme). It is important that sounds are pronounced correctly. Watch the short video on the phonics page of our website to listen to each sound.



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