



Learning together at Nursery



This booklet aims to give you some information about what we teach children in nursery, and how you can support and develop this learning outside school.

I hope you find it useful.

Thank you for your continued support.

Foundations for phonics - At school

Foundations for phonics is taught throughout nursery and concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the **phonic** work which starts in Reception. The emphasis is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

The most important aspects of Foundations for Phonics to develop in the nursery are:

- sharing high-quality stories and poems with children
- learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
- attention to high-quality language with children.

Children take part in daily activities that last around 15 mins each session.

Foundations for phonics - At home:

You can help your child develop by trying some of the ideas below. Remember that all these activities should be fun and interactive. Give your child lots of encouragement and cuddles as you play together. Smiles and praise will help develop a sense of achievement and build confidence.

This is all spoken (**oral**). Your child will **not** yet be expected to match the letter to the sound. The emphasis is on developing the ability to distinguish sounds and create sounds.

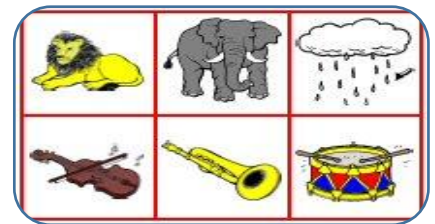
Environmental sounds

☑ Go on a listening walk. When walking down the road, make a point of listening to different sounds: cars revving, people talking, birds singing, dogs barking. When you get home, try to remember all the sounds you heard. You could try taping the sounds, to listen to them again, or try reproducing them yourselves, using your voices or instruments.

☑ Make sounds, using a range of props, such as running a stick along a fence or tapping the bin lid.

☑ Invent a secret family 'knock' for entering rooms.

☑ Play 'sound lotto'. A commercial version of this can be purchased from many children's toy shops but making your own, from your sound walk, would be far more rewarding.



Instrumental sounds

☑ Make your own musical instruments, using cardboard rolls, tins, dried peas, beans, stones. Shake these loudly, softly, as you are marching, skipping or stomping. Play 'Guess what's inside the instrument'.

☑ Sing known songs loudly and then softly, stretch words in known songs and add new words or sounds.

☑ Listen to a range of music with your child, from rap to classical. Encourage your child to move in response to the variety of musical styles and moods.

Body percussion

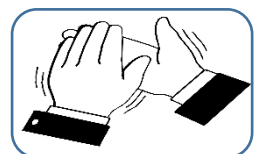
☑ Learn some action rhymes, such as 'Wind the bobbin up'.

☑ Play some songs. Clap along with familiar rhymes and learn new ones.

☑ Listen to the sounds your feet make when walking, running or skipping: slowly, softly, fast, stomping hard, in flipflops, boots, high heels.

☑ Try different types of clapping: clap your hands softly, quickly and make a pattern for your child to follow. Do the same clapping your thighs or stamping your feet. Tap your fingers. Click your tongue.

☑ Invent a special family clap routine for when someone does something really well.



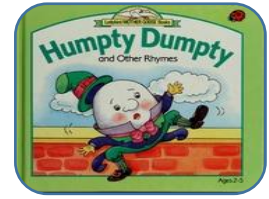
Rhythm and rhyme

☑ Get into the rhythm of language: bounce your child on your knee to the rhythm of a song or nursery rhyme; march or clap to a chant or poem.

☑ Help your child move to the rhythm of a song or rhyme.

☑ Read or say poems, songs, nursery songs and rhyming stories as often as you can. Try to use gestures, tap regular beats and pause to emphasise the rhythm of the piece.

☑ Add percussion to mark the beats using your hands, feet or instruments. Try out some rhythmic chanting such as 'two, four, six, eight, hurry up or we'll be late' or 'bip bop boo, who are you?'



Alliteration (words that begin with the same sound).

☑ Alliteration is a lot of fun to play around with. Your child's name can be a good place to start, for example, say: 'Gary gets the giggles', 'Carl caught a cat', 'Jolly Jessie jumped'. Encourage other family members to have a go, for example: 'Mummy munches muffins', 'Daddy is doing the dishes'.

☑ Emphasise alliteration in songs and stories, for example: 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers'.

☑ Play around with familiar song, such as 'Old MacDonald had some sheep, shoes, shorts, with a sh sh here and a sh sh there', to emphasise alliteration.

☑ Identify the odd one out, for example, cat, cup, boy, car.

☑ Make up little nonsense stories together using lots of alliteration

☑ Collect items that start with the same sound from the park, the garden and around the house.

☑ When shopping, think about items you are buying and say: 'a tall tin of tomatoes', 'a lovely little lemon'. Encourage your child to do the same.



Voice sounds.

☑ Repeat your infant's vocalisations.

☑ Make fun noises and nonsense words.

☑ Say words in different ways (fast, slowly, high, low, using a funny voice)

☑ 'Sing' known songs using only sounds (for example, 'la, la, la') and ask your child to guess the song.

☑ Vary your tempo and pitch when reading stories.

Oral blending and segmenting.

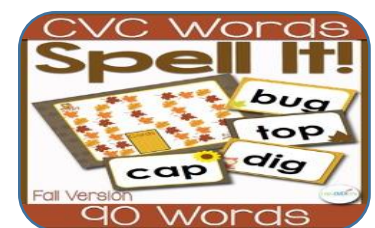
This is all oral (spoken). Your child will not be expected to match the letter to the sound at this stage. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds. Oral blending and segmenting is a later skill that will be important when the time comes for your child to read and write. Being able to hear the separate sounds within a word and then blend them together to understand that word is really important. **Blending is a vital skill for reading.** The separate sounds (**phonemes**) of the word are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word and are then merged together into the whole word. This merging is called **blending**.

For example, the adult would say

c-a-t = cat.

Segmenting is a vital skill for spelling. The whole word is spoken aloud, then broken up into its separate sounds (**phonemes**) in order, all through the word. For example, the adult would say

cat = c-a-t.



Activities

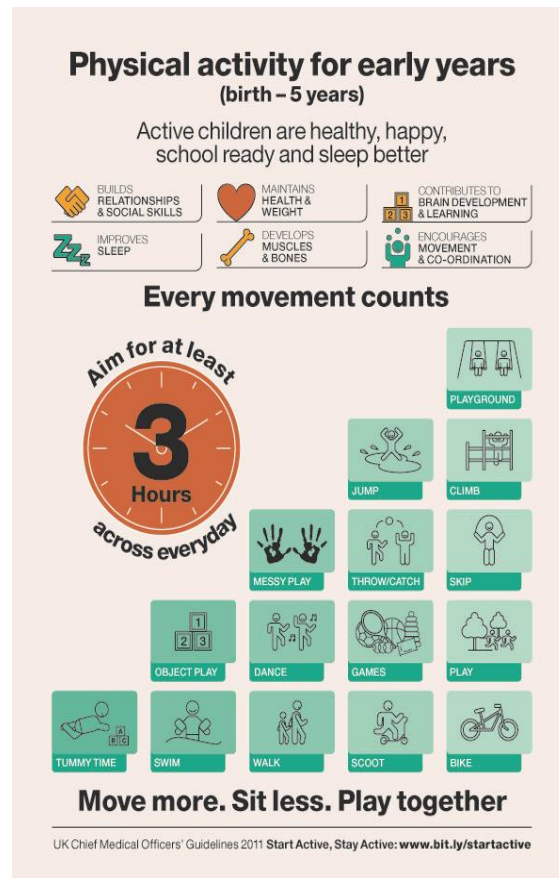
Ask your child to get things or put things on e.g. can you get your c-oa-t? Can you put on your h-a-t?

When playing together ask them to find things. For example, if you were playing with farm animals you could ask them to find the p-i-g

Ask your child to touch parts of their body e.g. can you touch your n-e-ck?

Physical development – at school

3 to 4-year olds should spend **at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day** in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play. More is better. The 180 minutes should include at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity.



Lots of time is spent active at nursery with specific PE sessions developing the fundamental skills (gross motor) that are then practised in the setting.

Physical development – at home

Keep active. Lots of opportunities for active play, get outdoors when you can. Here are things to try:

- Run (including around obstacles)
- Walk on a line
- Balance on one foot for 5 – 10 seconds
- Hop on preferred foot
- Jump with two feet together
- Pedal and steer a tricycle/scooter
- Walk up and down stairs with alternating feet, without support
- Climb
- Skip, leading with 1 leg
- Throw a ball with direction
- Bounce a ball
- Catch a thrown ball



Mealtimes also gives children the opportunity to build on their physical development. It is a great idea to let children serve themselves, water jugs and large serving spoons will support children in gaining independence and control over their larger movements. Manipulating cutlery can also support children to develop fine motor skills; as the child grows they will begin to use their fingers in a pincer grip, gaining better control. Children will require this skill in order to control a pencil for handwriting.

Fine motor skills are equally as important and taught and practised, for developing strength in the hands and wrists ready for pencil hold and mark making.

Here are things you can try to develop your child's fine motor skills:

- stack blocks
- string beads to make necklaces
- zips
- complete a simple puzzle (7 pieces or more)
- play with Duplo, train tracks etc...
- dress dolls
- scissor skills
- use tweezers
- help peg the washing out
- copy: vertical line, horizontal line, circle, cross, square, V, triangle
- Draw with a variety of things e.g. pencils, felt tips, chalk
- Draw in different things e.g. sand, shaving foam, flour
- Painting and gluing activities are great
- Playing with play dough is also a great way to build up strength in the hand to perform fine motor skills. Here is a simple recipe to make at home



microwave
PLAY DOUGH

- 2 Cups Flour
- 1 Cup Salt
- 4 Teaspoons Cream of Tartar
- 2 Cups Water
- 2 Tablespoons Oil
- Food Coloring or unsweetened Kool-Aid brand mix for color and scent

Microwave 1 minute on HIGH, stir, and continue cooking and stirring in 1 minute intervals until mixture is too thick to stir and makes a ball.

Communication and Language - at school

In the EYFS, communication and language development includes three aspects: Listening and Attention; Understanding; and Speaking. It underpins all planning and is of central importance for all learning and development.



Communication and Language-at home

Talking and listening.

- ☑ **Make time to listen to your child talking** – 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, bedtimes ... any time!
- ☑ **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** – for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together (for example, 'quack-quack', 'ssssss', 'yuk-yuk') and encourage your child to copy you.
- ☑ **Listen at home** – switch off the TV and listen to the sounds both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?
- ☑ **Play-a-tune** – and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!
- ☑ **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.

Reading- at school

As children enter nursery, they change a book to share at home which is really successful. Children learn the concepts of print and develop a love of books and story language through our book of the week. Early questioning around texts is introduced too. A love of reading is developed in areas of learning where children retell stories using roleplay puppets. World Book Day and themed days provides an opportunity for parents to stay and share stories with their child.

Reading - at home

Reading

- ☑ Make sure your child sees you reading.
- ☑ Read **to** your child each day. Show you like the book. Bring stories to life by using loud, soft, scary voices – let yourself go!
- ☑ Leave books around the house for your child to dip into.
- ☑ Let your child choose what **they** would like to read – books, comics, catalogues.
- ☑ Read favourite books over and over again. Enjoy!



Maths - at school

Early maths is covered during daily interactions with the children whilst child-initiated learning is taking place. E.g. Introducing the vocabulary full and empty in the water, taking turns singing 5 currant buns after making them in the dough.

Maths - at home

Count everyday objects together - Bringing numbers to life can be as easy as counting everyday items with your child. Start by counting small objects together: toys, fruit, or crayons will work. Only count one type of object at a time – note that this is more effective if the object is fun or enticing to them!

Sing counting songs - Many nursery rhymes are designed to help children to count. Counting songs like *5 current buns* and *5 little ducks* can be especially helpful when young children start thinking about adding and taking away. Using fingers as counters can be a useful way to make a visual link between numbers and quantity.



Point out numbers when out and about - We're surrounded by numbers wherever we go: try pointing out numbers when you see them! For example, waiting at the bus stop can be a great way to practice this: 'We need the number 3 bus... Here one comes: which number is that?'



Learning to recognise the shapes of numbers is as important as knowing how to count out loud, and introducing these symbols early will do wonders down the road. When travelling, pointing out house numbers, bus timetables, or platform numbers will demonstrate that numbers have a real life context.

Play board games together - As well as being a great way to spend family time, many children's board games can help with counting. Games using dice provide a great opportunity to count and add up numbers together. Playing simpler games like skittles will allow younger children to join in on the fun as the numbers are kept small.



Read counting books - There are many stimulating picture books with stories based around numbers that you can enjoy with your child.

[We're Not Sleepy](#) by Joanne Partis (Oxford) – this sweet little story is about three kittens who don't want to go to bed. There are lots of opportunities to spot and count the farmyard animals, ending with the sheep!

[Dinosaur Dig!](#) By Penny Dale (Nosy Crow) – this inventive counting story manages to combine diggers, dinosaurs and counting. *[Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes](#)* by Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury (Walker) – illustrated beautifully by the illustrator of *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, this story is ideal for young children.

Some useful websites to support learning at home

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

Advice and support for parents, educational activities and games, free eBook library for 3- to 11-year-olds

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/bookstart/families/>

Provides information about the national Bookstart scheme and the Bookstart packs that your child will receive as a baby, a toddler and at age three to four. It also gives information about sharing books with your child. You can find out about Bookstart events in your area, which you can attend with your child.

<https://nrich.maths.org/early-years>

Provides information **Free** curriculum-linked resources to develop mathematical reasoning and problem-solving curriculum.