

Phase 1

This is the beginning of the systematic learning of phonics and takes place predominately in Nursery or Pre-School. It falls primarily within the Communication, Language and Literacy area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

During this phase, children should be exposed to a language-rich environment. Activities are mainly adult led and build up to teaching children the important basic elements such as oral segmenting and blending.

Useful Tips

Sharing books from an early age is hugely beneficial for children.

Enjoying and sharing books from being young, enables children to see reading as a source of pleasure.

Through the sharing of good books, children's vocabulary increases which enables them to talk confidently.

This phase is divided into seven strands:

Aspect 1: Environmental Sounds

Children are exposed to a variety of sounds in the environment, being encouraged to copy them.

Aspect 2: Instrumental Sounds

Children are encouraged to listen to and make sounds using different instruments.

Aspect 3: Body Percussion

Children use their body to accompany songs and rhymes, for example, by clapping and tapping.

Aspect 4: Rhythm and Rhyme

Children are exposed to a range of books and rhymes. Children are encouraged to join in with repeated refrains and rhymes.

Aspect 5: Alliteration

Children are encouraged to listen to initial sounds within words. They are asked to think of other words beginning with the same sound.

Aspect 6: Voice Sounds

Children are asked to create different mouth movements and say a range of sounds.

Aspect 7: Oral Blending and Segmenting

This stage is vital before children are exposed to grapheme to phoneme correspondence (learning which letter represents each sound). It is all done orally and is to encourage children to hear the separate sounds within words.

Oral Blending

At first, the adult will show the children how this is done. The separate sounds (phonemes) are clearly spoken aloud, in order, fairly quickly and are then merged together into the whole word. For example:

m-a-n man

The merging together of the sounds is called blending. Initially, children may not be able to merge the sounds together independently and will need frequent practise which is highly beneficial.

Oral Segmenting

This is the opposite to oral blending. Here, children hear the whole word before it is then broken into separate sounds (phonemes). For example:

dog d-o-g

This skill is called segmenting and is vital in order for children be able to spell. Initially, children might only be able to hear the initial sound and will need frequent practise.

Ways You Can Support Your Child at Home

Share a range of rhymes.

Practise oral blending in and around the home. You can do this by talking in the following way:

- c-a-t, cat
- Can you put on your s-o-ck?

Initially, the children will just listen and then with time, they will be able to join in, hearing the words the sounds create.

Phase 2

This phase builds upon the oral blending and segmenting of the previous phase. Children must continue to practise what they have learnt. They will also then be taught the grapheme-phoneme representations (letters) for 19 letters. Additionally, they will be taught that phonemes (sounds) can be represented by more than one letter. For example: fin, huff

The suggested order for teaching the sounds, is as follows, with one set being taught each week:

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

The process of learning a sound, includes:

- Saying a number of words with the same initial sound, exaggerating it. E.g. ssssnake, ssssun
- Showing the children the grapheme (letter) that represents the sound.
- Flashing a card with the grapheme on one side and a picture on the other. When the children see the grapheme side, they are to say the sound. When they see the picture sound, they are to say the word corresponding to the picture.

VC and CVC Words

During this phase, children will be taught to read different words using the sounds and letters they have been exposed to.

V = vowel

C = consonant

VC words are those that consist of a vowel and then a consonant (am, on, it). **CVC words** are those that consist of a consonant then a vowel and then a consonant (cat, dog, pen). Some words such as bell are also CVC words because they only have three sounds. **b-e-ll**

Useful Tip

Pure sounds should be used when children are saying sounds. This means, where possible, the 'uh' sounds after consonants should not be said. E.g. the sound 'f' should be pronounced **ffff** rather than **fuh**.

The children will use magnetic letters to make and spell words, read words on the whiteboard and on flash cards as well as beginning to write words.

Tricky Words

During this phase, the children will also be exposed to tricky words; words that cannot be sounded out. **the, to, I, go, no**

Ways You Can Support Your Child at Home

Using the sounds the children have been exposed to, the following games and activities can be done:

- Using flashcards, expose children regularly to the sounds they have learnt. Remember to use pure sounds.
- Magnetic letters - Using magnetic letters on the fridge or any type of magnetic surface, children can practise making words.
- Make words using letter cards or magnetic letters. Ask the children to blend the sounds together to make the words.
- Ask children to spell out CV and CVC words both orally and on paper.

Phase 3

The purpose of this phase is to:

- Teach more graphemes; the remaining letters of the alphabet and some sounds of which are made up of two or three letters, known as digraphs and trigraphs.
E.g. 'ee' as in bee
- Practise blending and segmenting a wider range of CVC words.
- Read more tricky words and begin to spell them.
- To read familiar words on sight, rather than decoding them.

The following sounds are taught:

Set 6	Set 7	Digraphs	Trigraphs
j v w x	y z,zz qu	ch sh th ng ai ee oa oo ar or ur ow oi er	igh ear air ure

CVC Words Containing Digraphs and Trigraphs

Below are some examples of the words your child will be reading in this phase:

ship cook fork high beard chair

Frequent practise allows your child to become more fluent.

Useful Tip

It is important children quickly learn to recognise digraphs and trigraphs as one sound, rather than as separate letters. E.g. rain should be read as r-ai-n not r-a-i-n

Tricky Words

During this phase, the children will also be exposed to tricky words; words that cannot be sounded out.

he she we me be was my you her they all

Ways You Can Support Your Child at Home

Using the sounds the children have been exposed to, the following games and activities can be done.

Using flashcards, expose children regularly to the sounds they have learnt. Remember to use pure sounds. Try to increase the speed at which children are shown the sounds.