

Learning to read

There are a number of skills which children need in order to learn to read.

First, children need to learn to look at the pictures in books and talk about what they see. They might choose to tell a story using the pictures.

Children need to begin to recognise that print has meaning. They might do this by spotting the Morrisons sign when you go shopping, or seeing McDonalds.

When your child begins to see that print has meaning, they might begin to be able to point to where the words are in books.

A lot of very early reading relies on pattern – so the words might hardly change from page to page. This helps your child feel confident as they begin to point from left to right, using the repeating pattern of the words. Very often in this type of book the picture will really help your child to read the part of the text which changes.

We use a shared approach where

- The child listens to the story
- The child and adult read together with the adult guiding the child's finger under the word.
- The child 'reads' to the adult and begins to point to the word by themselves.

Next your child will be able to see the individual words. We can tell when they can do this because they begin to be able to point to each word, and make their magic finger jump like a frog over the finger spaces. (We call them finger spaces because when writing a finger in the space helps us to remember not to write there.)

Once your child can point to the words, they are ready to use the phonics that they have learned, and able to learn words that they cannot sound out, for example 'the', 'said'. We call these tricky words.



Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. They are taught how to recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes. Then they learn how to identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo' (we call these digraphs). As soon as children have learned some letter sounds, we teach them to blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word. You can do this without seeing the letters, just using your voice.

It is important to say sounds carefully when helping children blend sounds. Often adults add on an 'extra bit' so d becomes 'der', and s becomes 'ser'. These extra bits actually stop children from blending well!

For more information on the correct pronunciation of sounds, go to <http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/GetReading> and type 'phonics' into the search box. Then click where it says 'say the sounds chart'

Children can then use their phonic knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. This is a really important step in becoming a successful reader (and writer).

How can you help your child?

Show your child that reading is fun – let them see you reading.

Let them read a variety of books, magazines, and comics.

When they are first 'reading' or using the pictures to tell the story, try not to correct them. Children look at things differently from how we do, and their ideas are often amazing!

Don't try reading when you or your child is tired.

Don't just read the book, talk about what happened in the story. Was it a happy ending?

Use lots of praise to make sure your child feels successful.

Play games that develop memory, for example:

- Kim's game – a number of objects are placed on a tray. The child studies them for a few moments, then the objects are covered up. Can your child remember what is on the tray? If you take away one thing, can they say which you have taken?
- Pairs – a card available cheaply from ELC.
- Matching common words - can you find another card that has 'the' on. You can make the 'cards' from scrap paper.

Try to make sure that your child can reach their books – keep them somewhere accessible.

When you have read a favourite story, can your child retell the story events? What happened first? Next?

Children love to 'act out' favourite stories, either using their own bodies and voices, or puppets, dolls or minifigures. Encourage your child to change the story events and use different voices for the different characters.

Read in a quiet place. Please turn the television off!

Be prepared to read a favourite book again and again until it is worn out – this is a really important way for children to gain a love of books.

Don't labour over reading – little and often is better.

Visit the library – books are free to borrow.

Try to encourage your child to read books that will interest them – perhaps he loves dinosaurs – there are lots of dinosaur books out there!



If you have any questions or would like more information, please ask your child's teacher.

Reading is
fun!

How your
child learns
to read



Moldgreen CP School



