

Top Tips for

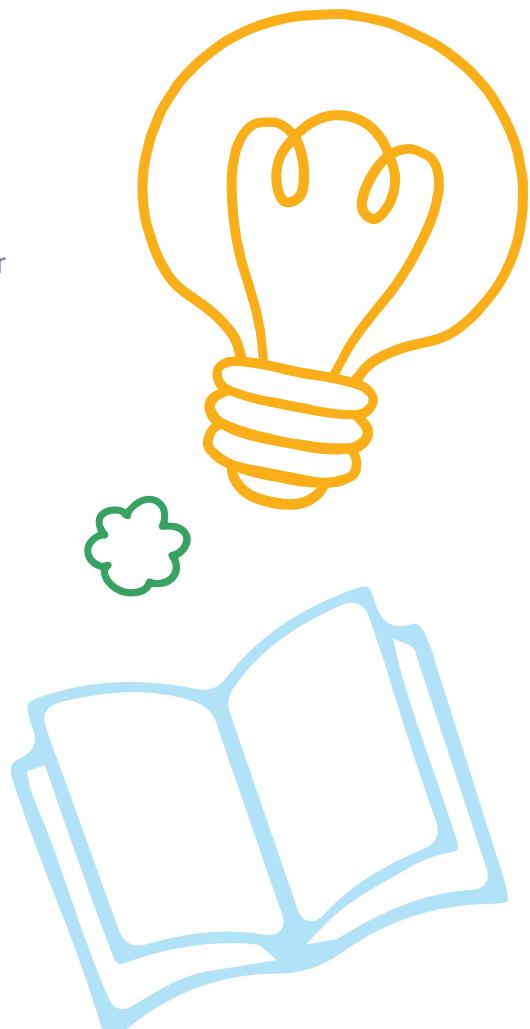
Practising Phonics

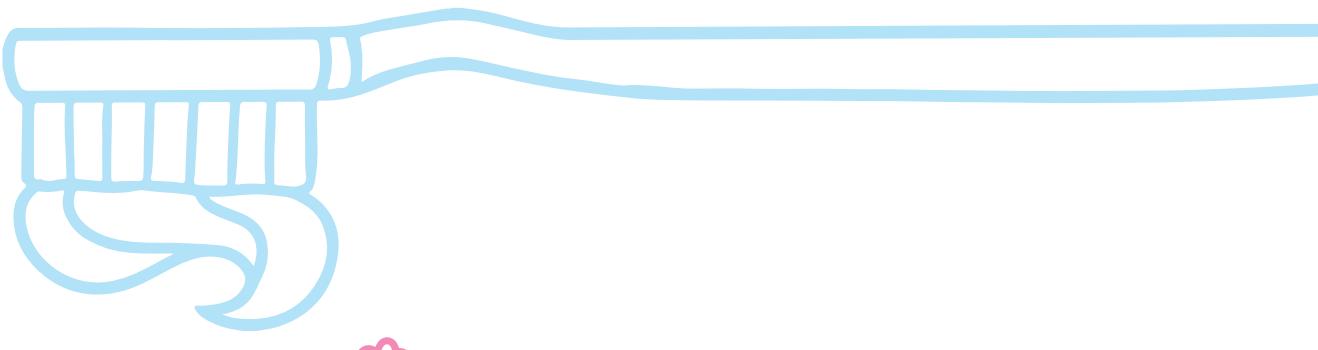
at Home and Out and About

If your child is learning phonics at school, you might want to support them at home but feel unsure of what to do.

You might feel that you haven't got the right knowledge or the right resources to help them. Don't worry! Read on for some super hints and tips on how you can help your child with quick activities that don't need lots of phonics knowledge or equipment. At this age, learning needs to be fun and engaging, giving your child opportunities to practise their skills in a relaxed manner.

If you are not sure what your child is learning, have a chat with their teacher, who will be able to provide you with a more detailed overview of what they've been learning in class.





Fun in the Bathroom

Mixed-Up Words

Give your child some foam letters to rearrange on the tiles to make words using the phonemes they have learnt so far.

Swap the Phoneme

Place the letters to make a word on the tiles, but change one letter so it is the wrong sound. Then, say the word and challenge your child to find the correct grapheme. For example, put the word 'cot' on the tiles. Say the word 'cat' to your child. Can they find and replace the wrong letter?

Hunt the Letters

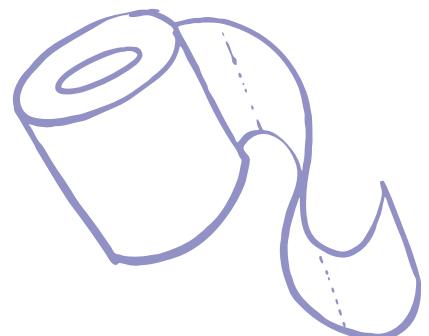
This is good for simple letter/sound recognition. Put all the letters in the bath, hiding under some bubbles. Then, say a sound and see how quickly your child can find the letter that represents the sound.

Sound Sponge

Play this when your child is in the bath. One person chooses a sound and then takes it in turns to think of a word starting with that sound. As soon as someone hesitates, they get a wet sponge squeezed on their head!

Bath Graffiti

Children love writing on things they think they shouldn't, so bath crayons are great for practising words. Say a word and ask them to write it. Alternatively, write some words and ask your child to read them.





Fun in the Kitchen

Ingredient Initial Sound

Use the first sound of ingredients to ask your child to guess what you need, adding an extra sound if they need it. For example, for eggs, you could say, "Now I need two /e/...." If your child does not guess, say, "I need two /e/, /g/..." until they guess the ingredient.

Recipe Race

Give your child a recipe. Say a word from the recipe that you know they are able to sound out. How quickly can they find the word?

Muffin Tray Toss

Write a sound inside each of the compartments in a muffin tray. Say a sound and see if your child can throw a jelly sweet into the correct compartment. You can make this more difficult by writing words into the compartments and saying the word for them to find.

Spaghetti Letters

Everyone loves alphabet spaghetti - even adults! Have a bowl of hot spaghetti and say a word for your child to spell out on a plate. As soon as they've spelt it out, they can eat the word!

Sound Cupcakes

Draw some digraphs (sounds which are made up of two letters, such as 'oo', 'ee', 'th', 'sh') on some rice paper with writing icing and place on top of some cupcakes. Can your child find the correct sound when you say it? They could choose a sound cupcake to eat at the end if they can say five words with that sound in!

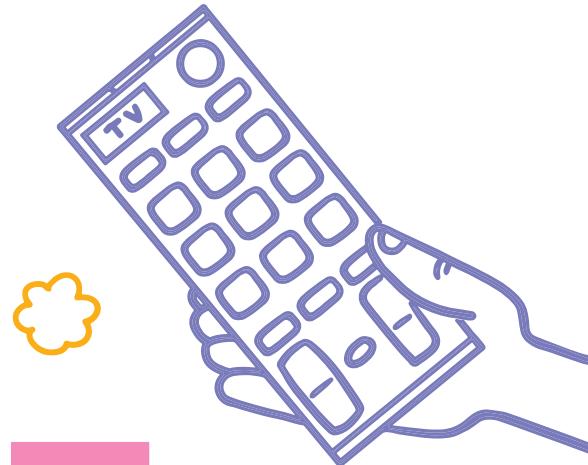


TV Captions

Watching television programmes with captions on helps your child to recognise and read words. As their reading improves, they'll want to read them all the time!

Teacher Writing

Children love being in charge and a game of 'teachers' gives them this opportunity. You can be a child and they can teach you a phonics lesson - you'll be able to gauge how much they know and what they're working on. They could say a word for you to spell and then they can mark it to see if it's correct. Investing in a cheap whiteboard will make this even more fun!



Fun in the Lounge



Tricky Word Pairs

Write some of the tricky words your child is learning at school on pieces of paper. Write each word on two separate pieces. Then, lay them out, face down, for a memory game to match the pairs. Take it in turns to turn two pieces of paper over. If they match, you get to keep them. If they don't, turn them back over. If you ask your child to write the words on the paper in preparation, they'll be getting extra practice!

Four in a Row Phonics

This game is for two players. Make a 7 by 6 grid on paper and fill each box with a word containing the phonemes that your child is currently learning. Both players have a felt-tip pen. Take it in turns to choose and read a word. If it is read correctly, cross that word with your felt-tip. If not, the other player crosses it. The first person to cross out four in a row wins!

Fun with Chalk

Pavement chalks are a great way to practise phonics. Your child can write out their spellings or the tricky words they are currently learning.

Squirt the Word

You need a water pistol and some chalks for this. Write some words using the phonemes your child is currently learning on a brick wall or patio with the chalk. Then, get your child to hold their fully-loaded water pistol facing away from the words. Shout out one of the words. As quickly as possible, your child needs to turn and shoot the correct word. You can make this even more fun by using another water pistol and shooting water at them if they get it wrong!

Letterscotch

Play a game of hopscotch with a difference! Draw out a hopscotch grid with a different sound in each square, for example, s, a, t, p, i, n, c, k, e, h, r. Now, say a word and your child is only allowed to jump on the letters in that word.

Stone Sounds

Collect some smooth, round stones in your garden or buy some from a garden centre. Paint a sound onto each stone with nail varnish. Once dry, they can be used outside to make words.

Messy Words

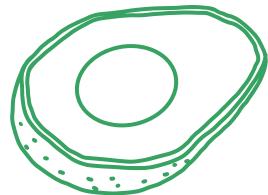
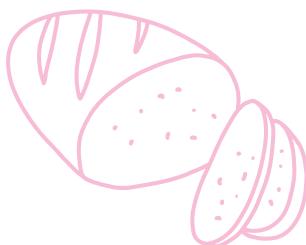
Get your child in a messy mood and ask them to make some lovely sticky mud! Then, you can dictate some words for them to spell out.

Tricky Word Aim Game

Get five to ten old cardboard boxes. On the outside flap of each box, use a big marker pen to write a tricky word. Place the boxes in a line. Give your child a beanbag and say a word. Can they throw their beanbag into the correct box? You could devise a scoring system for this.

Fun in the Garden

Fun in the Shop and Cafe



Initial Sound Hunt

Go down an aisle. Ask your child to find one/two/three items down that aisle starting with a certain sound. For example, in the bakery aisle, they might find baguette, brioche and bread rolls.

Menu Search

Ask your child to search for a certain sound in the menu and to tell you which words contain those sounds. Can they find different spellings of the same sound? For example, do they recognise that 'cheese', 'meat' and 'tasty' all contain the same sound, but spelt in different ways?

Broken words

Ask your child to find certain items in the shop, but say only the sounds: "Can you get me some c-o-ff-ee? Now can you find the c-r-i-s-p-s?"

List Maker

Ask your child to write the list for the shop and tick the items off as you put them in the trolley.

Trolley Hunt

Get your child to look at the items in your trolley and find the ones with a certain sound in the name. For example, for the "ch" sound, they might find chicken, chips and cheese.

Fun in the car



I Spy Sounds

Play I Spy but ask them to look out for something beginning with the initial sound, rather than the name of the letter.

Syllable Rhythms

Say a word and ask your child to clap the syllables in the word. Make it gradually more tricky by saying longer words with three or four syllables. Can they devise a little rhythm for each word?



Number Plate Madness

Ask your child to look at a car's number plate and make a silly saying using the three letters at the end of the number plate as initial letters. For example, for a number plate ending 'FDT' they could say "Fred's dead trout" or "Foxes don't text".

Make Me Rhyme

Develop your child's recognition of rhymes in words. Say a word and then the next person has to say a word that rhymes with it. Keep going until someone can't think of another word to rhyme. If someone says a word that's not a real word, they are out too!

Yes or no?

Say a statement but sound out the last word. Your child has to decide whether the statement is true (yes) or false (no). For example, "Cats are smaller than f-r-o-g-s."

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.



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