

Learning to read at Pitteuchar West

Part 1: Phonological Awareness

Learning to read is a journey. At Pitteuchar West, we follow the Fife Workshop for Literacy approach which uses the science behind learning to read, which breaks learning to read into 5 components which are taught to support success in reading.



As part of our school improvement priority to raise attainment in literacy, we have purchased a new reading and phonics scheme to support the teaching of all 5 components.

Each area will have its own guide to share with you how your child will be supported to gain these skills.

Tips for reading together and supporting their learning will also be included.

This first handout will focus on phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness is taught and learned orally and without print. It is the ability to hear, recognise and play with the 44 sounds in the spoken language.

This phase is sometimes referred to as ‘reading with your ears’.

Development of phonological awareness includes the following steps:

1. An awareness of rhyming words

Children enjoy finishing sentences from their favourite stories and songs with rhyming words “There’s a Wocket in my pocket”.

Nonsense words are lots of fun too.

2. Awareness of syllables. Clapping and tapping words help children to hear the individual sounds that make up words. “El-e-fant” 3 claps, Mi-sis-An-der-son 5 claps. Hearing, chunking words and repeating sounds is the skill being developed. Our language has a rhythm that is fun to engage with. Favourite books often have an engaging rhythm and rhymes.

3. Onset and rime. The onset is the initial sound and rime is the ending.



4. Sound isolation- awareness of Beginning, Middle and Ending sounds. The middle sound is the most difficult to hear and takes much longer for children to hear within a word.
“What is the first sound in big?” What do you hear at the end? What do you hear in the middle?”
5. Phonemic blending and segmentation- We would start with cv (consonant, vowel) words like ‘at’ ‘it’ before moving on to cvc words e.g. ‘c-a-t’. When your child is able to put together sounds e.g after hearing c—a—t can say “cat”, this is called blending. Segmentation is pulling apart sounds. “How many sounds are in dog?” “D-o-g”. “Which sounds do you hear in man?”
6. Phoneme manipulation- your child will be able to remove or change sounds to make new words. “Change the ‘b’ in ‘book’ to ‘t’. Which word would you make?” “Let’s add ‘t’ to ‘rain’. Which word have we made?”

Fun activities for families to support these skills:

“I am thinking of an animal that rhymes with *big*. What’s the animal?”
“What else rhymes with *big*?”

While you’re out, spot something and ask your child, “what rhymes with *tree* or *car* or *shop*?” Then switch roles and have your child spot something and ask you for a rhyme. This can turn into a game of nonsense rhymes (“What rhymes with *tree stump*?”) but that’s great for practicing sounds, too!

Alliteration or “tongue ticklers” — where the sound you’re focusing on is repeated over and over again. “Miss Mouse makes marvellous meatballs!”

