

# Phonological Awareness

PARENT/CARER GUIDE TO...

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognise and manipulate the sounds that make up our language. It is an **essential** skill for reading and writing.

## PARENTS AND CARERS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS DEVELOPMENT AT HOME IN SEVERAL WAYS:

1. **Read aloud to your child as often as possible!** Reading aloud to your child is a simple and effective way to help them develop their phonological awareness. Choose books with rhyme and repetition and encourage your child to join in with the words they know. **Don't forget your school/local library!**
2. **Play word games.** Play games that involve identifying and manipulating the sounds in words. For example, you could play "I Spy" and ask your child to find something that starts with a specific sound, or you could play "Rhyme Time" and ask your child to come up with words that rhyme with a given word.
3. **Sing songs and nursery rhymes as often as possible!** Singing songs and nursery rhymes is a fun way to help your child develop their phonological awareness. Encourage your child to join in with the words they know and point out words that rhyme.
4. **Practise phonemic awareness.** Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in words. You can practise phonemic awareness by playing games that involve segmenting words into individual sounds or blending sounds together to make words.
5. **Encourage storytelling.** Encourage your child to tell stories and ask them to describe the characters and events in detail. This helps to develop their vocabulary and their ability to recognise and manipulate the sounds in words.

**By incorporating these activities into your daily routine, you can help support your child's phonological awareness development and set them up for success in reading and writing.**

**EARLY SUCCESS IN READING IS THE STRONGEST PREDICTOR OF FUTURE ACADEMIC SUCCESS.**



# SIMPLE GAMES TO PLAY AT HOME

Here is a list of simple games you can play every day. Although simple, they will really help to boost your child's phonological awareness if played regularly.

**No resources necessary – play anywhere, any time!**

1	RHYME TIME	Ask your child to come up with words that rhyme with a given word, e.g. "cat" - "bat," "mat," "rat," etc.	
2	SOUND MATCH	Say two words that begin with the same sound, e.g. "dog" and "door," and ask your child to identify the sound they share.	
3	SYLLABLE COUNT	Say a word and ask your child to count the number of syllables - e.g. "butterfly" has three syllables.	
4	INITIAL SOUND HUNT	Give your child a letter sound and ask them to find objects around the room that start with that sound.	
5	WORD CHAIN	Start with a word, and have your child come up with a word that starts with the last sound of the previous word, e.g. "cat", "tree", "egg", "goat"	
6	SOUND SCAVENGER HUNT	Give your child a list of sounds to find around the house, e.g. "find something that starts with the 's' sound."	
7	BLENDING SOUNDS	Say individual sounds and ask your child to blend them together to make a word, e.g. "b-u-s" spells "bus."	
8	SEGMENTING SOUNDS	Say a word and ask your child to break it down into individual sounds, e.g. "bat" has three sounds: /b/ /a/ /t/.	
9	ALPHABET GAME	Have children take turns naming a letter of the alphabet and then coming up with a word that begins with that letter.	
10	SOUND SWAP	Give your child a word and have them swap out one sound for another to make a new word.	
11	ODD ONE OUT	Give your child a set of words and have them identify the word that does not belong based on its sound.	
12	GUESS MY WORD	Give your child clues about a word's sound or syllables, and have them guess the word.	

Why not tick off the games you play each week? Your child will enjoy the sense of achievement!



# PARENT/CARER GUIDE TO... Listening and Talking

Developing listening and talking skills in young children is **crucial** for their **cognitive** and **social** development. Here are some ways to promote listening and talking skills in young children:

## PARENTS AND CARERS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S LISTENING AND TALKING DEVELOPMENT AT HOME IN SEVERAL WAYS:

1. **Read aloud to your child:** Reading aloud to your child helps develop their listening skills and encourages them to communicate.
2. **Encourage conversation:** Encourage your child to talk to you about their thoughts and feelings. Ask open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
3. **Play games:** Play listening games such as Simon says, musical chairs, and telephone. These games require active listening and can help improve your child's listening skills.
4. **Practise active listening:** Teach your child the importance of active listening by modelling it yourself. Show them how to make eye contact, pay attention, and respond appropriately.
5. **Use music and songs:** Singing songs and listening to music is a fun way to develop listening and talking skills. Encourage your child to sing along and ask questions about the lyrics.
6. **Create a language-rich environment:** Surround your child with a language-rich environment by talking to them throughout the day, reading books, and using descriptive language.
7. **Provide opportunities for social interaction:** Social interaction is key to developing communication skills. Encourage your child to play with other children and engage in group activities.

**Remember that developing listening and talking skills takes time and patience. By consistently engaging in these activities, you can help your child improve their communication skills and set them up for success in literacy, learning and life.**



# SIMPLE GAMES TO PLAY AT HOME

Here is a list of simple games you can play every day. Although simple, they will really help to boost your child's listening and talking skills if played regularly.

**No resources necessary – play anywhere, any time!**

1	SIMON SAYS	This classic game is great for practising listening skills. The leader gives commands starting with "Simon Says" and the players must follow the commands. If the leader gives a command without saying "Simon Says" first, anyone who follows the command is out.	
2	STORYTELLING	This game helps develop language skills and encourages creativity. One person starts a story with a sentence, and then each player adds a sentence to the story in turn.	
3	TELEPHONE	Children sit in a circle and whisper a message to the person next to them. The message is then passed around the circle, and the final message is compared to the original. This game helps develop listening skills and teaches the importance of clear communication.	
4	CATEGORIES	This game is great for developing vocabulary and listening skills. One person chooses a category (e.g. animals), and then each player takes turns naming something that fits into that category. The game continues until someone can't think of anything else to add.	
5	CHARADES	This game is great for developing nonverbal communication skills. One person acts out a word or phrase without speaking, and the other players must guess what it is.	
6	20 QUESTIONS	This game encourages critical thinking and listening skills. One person thinks of a person, place, or thing, and the other players take turns asking yes or no questions to try to guess what it is.	
7	ROLE-PLAYING	This game is great for developing social and communication skills. Players take on different roles (e.g. doctor, patient) and act out scenarios that involve communicating with others.	
8	DEBATE	This game is great for developing critical thinking and communication skills. Children take opposing sides on a topic and argue their point of view in a structured debate. It may seem advanced but it is never too early to start teaching the skills of debating (instead of arguing!) Start off simple like favourite TV cartoon and why.	
9	I SPY	This game helps develop observation and listening skills. One person chooses an object in the room and says "I spy with my little eye something that is [colour] or something beginning with..." The other players must guess what the object is.	
10	GUESS THE SOUND	Play a variety of sounds, like a door creaking, a dog barking, or a bird chirping, and have children guess what they are hearing.	
11	HOT POTATO	In this game, children pass a small ball or object while music plays. When the music stops, the child holding the object must say a word or complete a sentence.	
12	SHOW AND TELL	Children simply choose any object and start speaking about it. It can be a description, why they like it...or anything else!	

Why not tick off the games you play each week? Your child will enjoy the sense of achievement!



# Developing Vocabulary

PARENTS/CARER GUIDE TO...

Developing vocabulary in young children is **crucial** as vocabulary is the foundation of communication. A strong vocabulary allows children to **express themselves** clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing. This is critical for success in school, social relationships, and future career prospects. A large vocabulary also helps children understand what they hear and read (comprehension).

Building a strong vocabulary helps children develop their **cognitive skills**, such as **memory**, **reasoning**, and **problem-solving**. Learning new words helps children make connections between different concepts and ideas, which can improve their critical thinking skills.

When children have a wide-ranging vocabulary, they feel more **confident** in their ability to communicate effectively. This confidence can spill over into other areas of their lives, such as social interactions and academic performance.

In short, developing vocabulary in children is crucial for their overall development and success. It sets the foundation for effective communication, academic achievement, and cognitive growth.

## PARENTS AND CARERS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AT HOME IN SEVERAL WAYS:

1. **Read to your child regularly:** Reading books aloud to your child is one of the most effective ways to develop vocabulary. Choose books with age-appropriate vocabulary and talk about the words as you read.
2. **Talk to your child:** Engage your child in conversation, describing what you see around you, or talking about your day. Use a variety of words and encourage your child to ask questions.
3. **Play word games:** Play simple word games like "I Spy" or "Name That Object" with your child. These games can help children learn new words and improve their ability to describe objects.
4. **Sing songs and recite rhymes:** Singing songs and reciting rhymes can help children learn new words and improve their language skills.
5. **Label objects:** Label objects around the house with their names. This will help children learn new words and associate them with the objects.
6. **Use picture books:** Picture books are a great way to help children learn new words. Point out objects in the pictures and label them with their names.
7. **Provide opportunities for social interaction:** Children learn new words through social interaction. Encourage your child to play with other children and engage in conversation.
8. **Use technology:** There are many apps and online resources that can help children learn new words. Make sure to choose age-appropriate content and monitor your child's use of technology.

**Remember that every child is different and learns at their own pace. Consistency is key, so make sure to incorporate these strategies into your daily routine to help your child develop a strong vocabulary.**



# SIMPLE GAMES TO PLAY AT HOME

Here is a list of simple games you can play every day. Although simple, they will really help to boost your child's vocabulary if played regularly.

Remember, the key to developing vocabulary in children is to make it fun and engaging. By incorporating games and activities into their learning, you can help them build a strong foundation for language development.

1	WORD BINGO	Create simple bingo cards with different words on them. Draw simple pictures for each word. Have your children mark the words as they are called out. This helps them to recognise and remember new words.	
2	SCAVENGER HUNT	Orally give your child a short list of objects to find around the house/garden. As they find each object, they could bring it to you, or even take a photo of it. You could then count out the syllables together.	
3	MEMORY MATCH	Create a memory game with pairs of word cards / word and pictures / words and definitions, and have children match them. This helps them to learn new words and also improves their memory skills.	
4	WORD JUMBLE	Choose one / a few new words for the day. Miss out some sounds in the words as you say them throughout the day and ask your child what sound / sounds are missing.	
5	WORD ASSOCIATION	Choose a word and ask your child to come up with other words that are related to it. For example, if you say "dog," your child might say "puppy," "bark," or "leash." This game can help expand their vocabulary and help them make connections between words.	
6	STORYTELLING	Tell stories and encourage children to tell stories using new vocabulary words.	
7	WORD BUILDING	Use letter blocks or tiles to create new words and encourage children to spell them correctly.	
8	HANGMAN	Play the classic game of hangman with new vocabulary words.	
9	WORD PUZZLES	Create word puzzles like crosswords or word searches. You could read the list to them orally, and they could attempt to find them – making early links between speech and written word.	
10	VOCABULARY CHARADES	Act out words and have children guess the correct word (from recently learned new vocabulary). It can be a fun way to practice vocabulary and can also help with non-verbal communication skills.	
11	I SPY	In this game, one person chooses an object in the room and says, "I spy with my little eye something that is..." and then describes the object using adjectives. The other players have to guess what the object is. This game helps children learn new adjectives and practice describing objects.	

Why not tick off the games you play each week? Your child will enjoy the sense of achievement!





# PARENT/CARER GUIDE TO... Developing Comprehension

Developing comprehension skills in young children is **crucial** for their academic success and overall cognitive development. Children who have strong comprehension skills are more likely to **understand** what they are reading, which can help them succeed in their learning.

Comprehension skills are also important for lifelong learning. The ability to read and understand texts is critical for **acquiring knowledge** and **staying informed** throughout life.

Strong comprehension skills also help **critical thinking**. When children can comprehend what they read, they can analyse and evaluate information more effectively, which is an essential skill for **problem-solving** and **decision-making**.

Good comprehension skills also **promote effective communication**. Children who can understand what they hear and read are better able to communicate their own thoughts and ideas, which is critical for success in social and professional settings.

Finally, developing comprehension skills in young children can boost their **confidence and self-esteem**. When children can understand what they read and hear, they feel more competent and capable, which can lead to greater success and happiness in all areas of life.

## PARENTS AND CARERS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S LISTENING AND TALKING DEVELOPMENT AT HOME IN SEVERAL WAYS:

1. **Read aloud to your child:** Reading aloud to your child is one of the best ways to help them develop comprehension skills. As you read, ask questions about the story, characters, and plot.
2. **Encourage your child to ask questions:** Encourage your child to ask questions about the story or topic you are discussing. This will help them to think critically and engage with the material.
3. **Use visual aids:** Use visual aids like pictures, charts, and graphs to help your child better understand the material. This can be particularly helpful for children who are visual learners.
4. **Make connections:** Encourage your child to make connections between what they are reading and their own experiences. This will help them to better understand and remember the material.
5. **Encourage active reading:** Encourage your child to actively engage with the material as they read. This can include taking notes, underlining key points, and summarizing what they have read.
6. **Model good reading habits:** Finally, be a good role model for your child by reading yourself and demonstrating good reading habits. This will help them to see the value of reading and develop a love for learning.



# SIMPLE GAMES TO PLAY AT HOME

Here is a list of simple games you can play every day. Although simple, they will really help to boost your child's comprehension skills if played regularly.

1	I SPY	This classic game involves one person choosing an object in the room and giving a clue such as "I spy with my little eye, something red." The child then has to guess which object is being described.	
2	STORY SEQUENCING	Choose a simple story or nursery rhyme and read it to the child. Then, ask them to retell the story in their own words or with pictures.	
3	SIMON SAYS	This game involves following instructions and listening carefully. The leader says "Simon says touch your toes" and the players have to follow the instruction. If the leader says "touch your toes" without saying "Simon says", the players shouldn't follow the instruction.	
4	MEMORY GAME	Put several items on a tray, such as a spoon, a toy car, a rubber ball, and a pencil. Give the child a few seconds to memorize the items, then cover the tray and ask them to list all the items they saw.	
5	FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS	Give the child a set of instructions to follow, such as "take three steps forward, turn around, and clap your hands twice." This game helps with listening skills and following directions.	
6	GUESS WHO	Choose a person or character and give clues about their appearance or personality. For example, "this person has yellow hair and wears glasses." Your child then has to guess who you're describing.	
7	WORD ASSOCIATION	Say a word, such as "cat", and ask the child to say a word that is associated with it, such as "mouse". You can also take turns coming up with words.	
8	STORYTIME	Read a short story or a picture book to your child and ask them questions about the story afterwards. For example, you could ask them to summarise the plot or identify the main characters.	
9	PICTURE PUZZLES	Give your child a picture with hidden objects or characters and ask them to find them all. This will help them to develop their observation skills and attention to detail.	
10	FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS	Give your child a set of instructions to follow, such as "put the blue ball on the red chair" or "draw a circle around the picture of the dog." This will help them to improve their ability to follow directions.	
11	MEMORY GAMES	Play memory games with your child, such as matching pairs of cards or objects. This will help to develop their memory skills and their ability to recall information.	
12	SEQUENCING	Give your child a set of pictures or objects that are out of order and ask them to put them in the correct order. This will help them to develop their sequencing skills and their ability to understand cause and effect.	

Why not tick off the games you play each week? Your child will enjoy the sense of achievement!





# PARENT/CARER GUIDE TO... Getting Ready to Write

Getting Ready to Write is the term we use to cover all **pre-writing skills**. These skills are **crucial** for young children to develop because they lay the foundation for successful writing later in life. These skills involve the development of the following -

**Hand-eye coordination** - the ability to coordinate their hand movements with what they see. This is important for writing, as it allows children to control the movement of their pen or pencil on paper.

**Fine motor skills** - the small movements of the hands and fingers that are needed for writing. These skills include gripping a pen or pencil, manipulating small objects, and using scissors.

**Visual perception** - the ability to perceive and interpret visual information. This includes the ability to distinguish between different shapes, colours, and sizes, which is important for writing and drawing.

**Letter formation** - forming letters and numbers correctly. When children have a strong foundation in pre-writing skills, they are more likely to write letters and numbers **accurately** and **with ease**.

**Confidence** - finally, developing pre-writing skills can boost a child's confidence in their ability to write. When children feel comfortable and competent in their pre-writing skills, they are more likely to **enjoy** writing and be **motivated** to continue practising and improving.

## PARENTS AND CARERS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S GETTING READY TO WRITE DEVELOPMENT AT HOME IN SEVERAL WAYS:

1. **Encourage drawing and colouring:** Provide your child with paper, crayons, markers, and pencils to encourage them to draw and colour. Encourage them to create their own pictures and designs.
2. **Play with playdough:** Playing with playdough helps children develop their fine motor skills, which are essential for writing. Encourage your child to make different shapes, letters, and numbers using playdough.
3. **Provide opportunities for cutting:** Give your child child-safe scissors and let them practise cutting paper. This helps to develop their hand-eye coordination and hand muscles.
4. **Practise tracing:** Provide your child with tracing worksheets or tracing paper and encourage them to trace different shapes and lines. This helps them to learn the proper strokes for writing letters and numbers.
5. **Use sensory play:** Sensory play involves exploring materials with different textures such as sand, rice or beads. This type of play helps children develop their hand muscles and improves their fine motor skills.
6. **Engage in gross motor activities:** Gross motor activities such as crawling, jumping, and playing ball games help children to develop their hand-eye coordination and strengthen their core muscles, which are important for writing.
7. **Read books and practise letter recognition:** Read books with your child and encourage them to identify letters and words. This helps them to develop their visual perception and letter recognition skills.

**Overall, the key is to provide children with a variety of activities that encourage the development of fine and gross motor skills. This will help them to develop the necessary skills for writing and other important tasks.**



# SIMPLE GAMES TO PLAY AT HOME

Here is a list of simple games you can play every day. Although simple, they will really help to boost your child's Getting Ready to Write skills if played regularly.

1	DRAWING CHALLENGES	Encourage children to draw and colour pictures using crayons, pens, or pencils. Challenge them to draw things as well as free drawing. This helps to develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.	
2	TRACING GAMES	Provide children with tracing sheets or templates that they can use to trace letters, shapes, or numbers. This helps to develop hand control and muscle memory. If they are tracing letters or numbers, model and encourage following the correct paths – right from the beginning.	
3	WRITING GAMES	Provide children with a variety of writing tools (e.g. markers, pencils, or crayons) and encourage them to write their name, draw simple shapes, or trace letters. This helps to develop hand control and letter formation skills.	
4	PLAYDOUGH GAMES	Playdough is a great sensory tool that children can use to roll, shape, and mould. Encourage children to make shapes and letters using playdough to develop hand strength and coordination.	
5	PUZZLES	Puzzles are a great way to develop problem-solving skills and hand-eye coordination. Choose puzzles with large, easy-to-handle pieces and simple designs to start.	
6	SORTING GAMES	Provide children with a variety of objects (e.g. beads, buttons, or toys) and ask them to sort them based on colour, size, or shape. This helps to develop visual perception and categorisation skills.	
7	SENSORY GAMES	Set up a sensory table with a variety of textures (e.g. sand, rice, or beans) and provide children with tools to explore and manipulate the materials. This helps to develop sensory processing and fine motor skills.	
8	WRITING IN SAND	Use a shallow tray filled with sand and let your child use their fingers to practise writing letters and shapes.	
9	BEADING	Give your child a variety of beads and a string to thread them onto, which will help develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills.	
10	CUTTING AND STICKING	Provide your child with scissors and glue and encourage them to cut out shapes and stick them onto paper.	
11	STICKER BOOKS	Sticker books allow children to practise peeling and sticking stickers onto pages, which is great for developing fine motor skills.	
12	DRAWING ANYWHERE!	Take drawing outside with brushes and paint in the garden. Simple water on a brush can be fun to 'paint' on slabs. Use of wallpaper, chalk and anything else that makes a mark or acts as a surface can be very engaging.	
13	PLAYING WITH BLOCKS	Playing with blocks can help develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills, as well as spatial awareness.	

Why not tick off the games you play each week? Your child will enjoy the sense of achievement!

