

# Early Learning Newsletter

## Summer term - 2020

### Supporting Transitions

As a parent, you're probably thinking about what you can do help your child to be ready for school while they're not in pre-school. Being ready to read is often a big concern. To reassure you, at nursery your child will have been following the Letters and Sounds phase 1 programme (DfES 2007) for quite some time, probably without you even knowing it. We start the Letters and Sounds programme with our very young children. We help children to develop their listening skills, so that they are able to discriminate sounds in words; supporting rhythm and rhyme so that they can hear the rhythm of spoken and written language and playing with sounds, to begin to make the sounds in words that they will later read in books. To bring letters and sounds to you at home, Vanessa is planning to deliver 'Boogie Mites' on-line, via Google Meet, to support children's phonological awareness and you can join in at home. To further support reading readiness, you can share books every day, and those children who are in pre-school will continue to enjoy stories both one-to-one and in groups. Key to reading readiness is enabling children to enjoy the pleasure of books so that they have a strong desire to read alone in the future.

When he/she goes to school, in Reception Class, your child will continue to follow phase 1 of the Letters and Sounds programme until they reach key stage 1 (year 1). Then they will move into phase 2.

Letters and sounds is a 6 phase programme that enables children to develop their knowledge of sounds and letters; phase 1 focuses on learning through children's play using the 7 areas of learning set out in the EYFS.

Here are some of the things that you can do at home, to support reading readiness and develop phonological skills ready for school:

- Go for a 'listening walk' – when going shopping or sitting in the garden, stop, close your eyes for a few moments and listen. What can you hear? Aeroplanes, a dog barking, a child crying a few gardens away, the sound of a fire engine in the town. Remind your child what 'good listeners' do: keep quiet, have ears ready and listen. Talk about the different sounds you can hear. Your child can then draw a picture of what they heard.
- Drumming outdoors – find a couple of sturdy sticks, you could use a couple of wooden spoons or some stiff pencils – one for you, and one for your child. Wander around the garden tapping things to listen to what they sound like – try the tree, the leg of the garden table and the chair. Do they sound the same? Or different? Try tapping the tree with the beater – what does that sound like? What about pipes? Plant pots of different sizes?
- You could then decide which is your favourite sound – move items around the garden and play a 'tune'.
- Sing the Jack song with your child, they will know the song well by now, or you could do 'robot' sounds (speaking in a robot style voice) or 'silly' sounds – all help your child to discriminate different kinds of sounds and then support listening when they play back and listen to their own voices.

J – A – CK, Jack, J – A – CK, Jack

What is in your S – A – CK, Sack?

(Here are some things you could put in your sack; P – I – G; S – O – CK; P – E – N; H – A – T;

Pull the items out of the sack one by one and with robot speak, sound out the name of the items. Watch out for this song on our Letters and Sounds 'google meet' session with Vanessa, coming soon!

- *Mrs Browning has a box....* find an old box or bag. Put around half a dozen items in it (a packet of crisps, some keys, a squeaky toy). Put your hand in the box and as you sing the song, pause to let the child try to guess what item is making the sound. You can then both make the sound with your voices.
  - Sing to the tune of 'old MacDonald had a farm'

- *Mrs Browning has a box ee I, ee I, oh....*
  - *And in that box she has a .....* PAUSE – GESTURE AND ASK YOUR CHILD TO LISTEN
  - HANDLE ONE OF THE OBJECTS, OUT OF SIGHT TO MAKE A NOISE.
  - CONTINUE THE SONG BUT USING YOUR VOICES TO MAKE THE SOUND
  - *With a ‘crackle crackle’ here, and a crackle crackle there.....*
  - *With a squeak squeak here..... with a jingle jingle here.....*
  - Allow your child to take a turn and you guess what's in the box.
- Sing lots of rhymes and songs. Make up song bags to illustrate your child's favourite songs. For example, the wheels on the bus (toy bus), plastic duck (five little ducks), plastic frog (five little speckled frogs) and pull them out of the song bag one by one to trigger a singing session.
  - Use your tapping sticks as musical instruments when you sing – tap out a rhythm which helps to develop children's understanding of rhythm in spoken and written language.
  - Have fun with sounds – make up silly sentences with words that all start with the same letter – ping pang poo pop, mig mog mully mo, fo fi fanle fee – imagine what these strange creatures might look like? Draw them...are they aliens or monsters? This is playing with words and alliteration.
  - Play I spy – this is great for initial sounds and it really doesn't matter if they get it wrong (h for hairplane???) your child might find this hard in the early stages because it's really hard to separate out the first sound. That's why playing all the other games are so important; don't be anxious if they can't hear the initial sound yet – go back and do more games that help to refine hearing and listening skills.

Don't worry about letters, words and flash cards...these can come later. For now, have fun and develop those listening skills!

#### **DfE guidance - Transitions**

For parents with children under 5 years old who have not yet started school, the Department for Education's [Hungry Little Minds campaign](#) features tips and practical activities that you can do at home with children to support their early learning. There are many simple ways to help your children learn and it does not have to feel like 'learning'. Having everyday conversations, make-believe play and reading together all make a big difference to your child's development. You can find more ideas and content from the BBC's [Tiny Happy People campaign](#) and the National Literacy Trust's [Family Zone](#). We have also published further guidance on how to [help children aged 2 to 4 to learn at home during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

Please ask for more information on early reading/phonics if you need it.

Best wishes,

*Caroline, Vanessa and the team*