



Phonics Bug

Phonics Information for Parents and Carers



What is phonics?

Phonics is one method of teaching children how to read and write.

Phonics is all about sounds. There are 44 sounds in the English language, which we put together to form words.

Some are represented by one letter, like 't', and some by two or more, like 'ck' in duck and 'air' in chair.

Children are taught the sounds first, then how to match them to letters, and finally how to use the letter sounds for reading and spelling.

Synthetic phonics refers to 'synthesising', or blending, the sounds to read words. It is based on the idea that children should sound out unknown words and not rely on their context.

We really hope you find this information useful. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to speak to either your child's class teacher or Mrs Johnson. Thank you for your continued support!

Introduction

As you know, the ability to read and write well is a vital skill for all children, paving the way for an enjoyable and successful school experience.

Children learn and practise many of the skills that they need for reading and writing from a very early age. They do this through a wide range of activities and experiences, at home, in settings and in school. They explore and learn through singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, talking with others, sharing books with adults and other children and dressing up.

Children's spoken language supports reading and writing

Speaking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing. Even everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out offer you the chance to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. Through these activities, children hear the way language is put together into sentences for a purpose.



Books are a rich source of new words for your child; words you would not use in everyday conversations appear in books. Children need to have a wide vocabulary to understand the meaning of books, so read aloud and share books as often as you can. They will enjoy it and it will be useful to them when they come across these words in their own reading later on.

Sounds in spoken language – the beginning of phonics

At Enfield Academy your child will take part in high-quality phonics sessions, using Phonics Bug Scheme, every day. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking and listening games, where the emphasis is on children's active participation. They learn to use their phonic knowledge for reading and writing activities and in their independent play.

The aim of this booklet is to give you a clear picture of how we approach the teaching of phonics and word recognition and how, as a parent or carer, you can support and encourage your child at home.

Not all children will learn at the same rate!

From a very early stage, children develop awareness of different sounds in spoken language. They develop understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds (*phonemes*) and they learn to match these phonemes to letters (*graphemes*). Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds (*graphemes to phonemes*), for example, c as in 'cat', ll as in 'fell', ee as in 'sheep'.

Children use this phonic knowledge when they are reading and writing. This approach has been shown to provide a quick and efficient way for most young children to learn to read words on the page, fluently and accurately. We want children to develop this skill so that it becomes automatic. This also greatly helps them with their spelling.

At Enfield Academy we use a systematic phonics programme called *Phonics Bug*.

Phonics Bug is divided into six phases, with each phase building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning. There are no big leaps in learning. Children have time to practise and rapidly expand their ability to read and spell words. They are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words', which are words with spellings that are unusual.

Phase 1 – This begins when your child starts Nursery but is continued at the beginning of their school journey at Enfield.



This paves the way for systematic learning of phonics and starts in our nursery.

Teachers plan activities that will help children to listen attentively to sounds around them, such as the sounds of their toys and to sounds in spoken language. Teachers teach a wide range of nursery rhymes and songs. They read good books to and with the children. This helps to increase the number of words they know - their *vocabulary* - and helps them talk confidently about books.

Ways you can support your children at home

Play 'What do we have in here?' Put some toys or objects in a bag and pull one out at a time. Emphasise the first sound of the name of the toy or object by repeating it, for example, 'c c c c - car', 'b b b b - box', 'ch ch ch ch - chip'.

Say: 'A tall tin of tomatoes!' 'Tommy, the ticklish teddy!' 'A lovely little lemon!' This is called alliteration. Use names, for example, 'Gurpreet gets the giggles', 'Milo makes music', 'Naheema's nose'.

Teach them '*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*'.

Help your child move to the rhythm of a song or rhyme.

Read or say poems, songs, nursery songs and rhyming stories as often as you can, try to use gestures, tap regular beats and pause to emphasise the rhythm of the piece.

Add percussion to mark the beats, using your hands, feet or instruments.

Try out some rhythmic chanting such as 'two, four, six, eight, hurry up or we'll be late' or 'bip bop boo, who are you?'

Learning how to 'sound-out'

We show children how to do this - c-a-t = cat. The separate sounds (*phonemes*) are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word. The merging together is called *blending* and is a vital skill for reading.

Children will also learn to do this the other way around - cat = c-a-t. The whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its sounds (*phonemes*) in order, all through the word. This is called *segmenting* and is a vital skill for spelling.

This is all oral (*spoken*). Your child will not be expected to match the letter to the sound at this stage. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds.



Ways you can support your children at home

Sounding out/segmenting

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (*sounds*) and practise 'sound talk'. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

'I spy a p-e-g - peg.'

'I spy a c-u-p - cup.'

'Where's your other s-o-ck - sock?'

'Simon says - put your hands on your h-ea-d.'

'Simon says - touch your ch-i-n.'

'Simon says - pick up your b-a-g.'

Phase 2

In this phase children will continue practising what they have learned from phase 1, including

'segmenting/sounding-out'. They will also be taught the phonemes (*sounds*) for a number of letters (*graphemes*), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by **more than one letter**, for example, /ll/ as in **b-e-ll**. They may be using pictures or hand movements to help them remember these VC and CVC words.

C and V are abbreviations for 'consonant' and 'vowel'. VC words are words consisting of a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *am, at, it*) and CVC words are words consisting of a consonant then a vowel then a consonant (e.g. *cat, rug, sun*). Words such as *tick* and *bell* also count as CVC words - although they have four letters, they have only three sounds. For example, in the word *bell*, **b** = consonant, **e** = vowel, **ll** = consonant.

Now the children will be seeing letters and words, as well as hearing them. They will be shown how to make whole words by pushing magnetic or wooden letters together to form little words, reading little words on the interactive whiteboard and breaking up words into individual sounds, which will help their spelling. These will be simple



words made up of two phonemes, for example, *am*, *at*, *it*, or three phonemes, for example, *cat*, *rug*, *sun*, *tick*, *bell*.

Tricky words

They will also learn several tricky words: *the*, *to*, *I*, *go*, *no*, *of*, *put*, *into*

Children will still be practising oral blending and segmenting skills daily. They need plenty of practice at doing this.

Saying the sounds

Your child will be taught how to pronounce the sounds (*phonemes*) correctly to make blending easier.

Sounds should be sustained where possible (e.g. *sss*, *fff*, *mmm*) and, where this is not possible, 'uh' sounds after consonants should be reduced as far as possible (e.g. try to avoid saying 'buh', 'cuh'). Teachers help children to look at different letters and say the right sounds for them.



Ways you can support your children at home

Magnetic letters

Buy magnetic letters for your fridge, or for use with a tin tray. Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

Making little words together

Make little words together, for example, *it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met, pick*. As you select the letters, say them aloud: 'a-m – am', 'm-e-t – met'.

Breaking words up

Now do it the other way around: read the word, break the word up and move the letters away, saying: 'met – m-e-t'.

Both these activities help children to see that reading and spelling are reversible processes.

Little whiteboards and pens, and magic boards, are a good way for children to try out spellings and practise their handwriting.

Your child might be trying to use letters from their name to write; this shows that they know that writing needs real alphabet letters.

Getting Ready for Writing

Writing in lower-case letters

We shall be teaching lower-case letters, as well as capital letters. As most writing will be in lower-case letters it is useful if you can use these at home. A good start is for your child to write their name correctly, starting with a capital letter followed by lower-case letters.

Ways you can support your children at home

For handwriting, children need to be well co-ordinated through their whole body, not just their hands and fingers. Games that help co-ordination include throwing balls at a target, underarm and over-arm, and bouncing balls – also skipping on the spot, throwing a Frisbee, picking up pebbles from the beach and throwing them into the sea. Have fun!

Hand and finger play

Action rhymes such as '*Incy wincy spider*', '*One potato, two potato*' and '*Tommy Thumb*' are great fun and get children's hands and fingers moving. Playing with salt dough



or clay really helps strengthen little fingers, as does cookery and using simple toolkits.
Hand-eye co-ordination

Pouring water into jugs and cups of different sizes, sweeping up with a dustpan and brush, cutting, sticking, tracing, threading beads, completing puzzles, peeling off stickers and sticking them in the right place – these all help hand-eye co-ordination.

Pencil hold

The 'pincer' movement needs to be practised. This is important as it enables children to hold a pencil properly as they write. Provide them with kitchen tongs and see if they can pick up small objects. Move on to challenging them to pick up smaller things, for example, little cubes, sugar lumps, dried peas, lentils, first with chopsticks, then with tweezers.

Ask children to peg objects to a washing line. Provide plenty of different types of pens and pencils; hold their hand to practise the correct grip.

Phase 3

The purpose of this phase is to:

- teach more graphemes, most of which are made of two letters, for example, 'oa' as in **boat**
- practise blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, for example, **fizz, chip, sheep, light**
- learn all letter names and begin to form capital letters correctly
- read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them
- read and write words in phrases and sentences.

CVC words containing graphemes made of two or more letters

Here are some examples of words your children will be reading: **tail, week, right, soap, food, park, burn, cord, town, soil**

Their confidence from the daily experience of practising and applying their phonic knowledge to reading and writing will really pay off!



Tricky words

The number of tricky words is growing. These are so important for reading and spelling: he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are



Ways you can support your children at home

Sing an alphabet song together.

Play 'I spy', using letter names as well as sounds.

Continue to play with magnetic letters, using some of the two grapheme (letter) combinations:

r-ai-n = *rain* blending for reading

b-oa-t = *boat* blending for reading

h-ur-t = *hurt* blending for reading

rain = *r-ai-n* - segmenting for spelling

boat = *b-oa-t* - segmenting for spelling

hurt = *h-ur-t* - segmenting for spelling

Praise your child for trying out words.

Support your child with any spellings that they have been sent home with.

Set a timer. Call out one word at a time and get your child to spell it on a magic board or a small whiteboard, against the timer - remember, they can use magnetic letters.

Play 'Pairs', turning over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: **the the, to to, no no, go go, I I**

Don't worry if they get some wrong! These are hard to remember - they need plenty of practice.



Phase 4

Children continue to practise previously learned graphemes and phonemes and learn how to read and write:

CVCC words: tent, damp, toast, chimp

For example, in the word 'toast', t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant.

CCVC words: swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon

For example, in the word 'cream', c = consonant, r = consonant, ea = vowel, m = consonant.

They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

Tricky words: said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what.



Ways you can support your children at home

Practise reading and spelling some CVCC and CCVC words but continue to play around with CVC words. Children like reading and spelling words that they have previously worked with, as this makes them feel successful.

Make up captions and phrases for your child to read and write, for example, a silver star, clear the pond, crunch crisps. Write some simple sentences and leave them around the house for your child to find and read. After they have found and read three, give them a treat!

Look out for words in the environment, such as on food packaging, which your child will find easy to read, for example, lunch, fresh milk, drink, fish and chips, jam.

Work on reading words together, for example, a street name such as Park Road, captions on buses and lorries, street signs such as bus stop.

Phase 5

In phase 5 children will:

Be taught further graphemes for reading.

Be taught alternative pronunciations for graphemes.

Be taught alternative spellings for phonemes. Recognise graphemes in reading words.

Practise reading and spelling of high-frequency (common) words.

Practise reading and spelling two-syllable and three-syllable words. We call these polysyllabic words.

Practise reading and writing sentences.

Children entering Phase Five are able to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants and some polysyllabic words.

The purpose of this phase is for children to broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these and graphemes they already know, where relevant. Some of the alternatives will already have been encountered in the high frequency words that have been taught.

Children become quicker at recognising graphemes of more than one letter in words and at blending the phonemes they represent. When spelling words they will learn to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words.

For example; Learn new phoneme 'zh' in words such as **treasure**.



Ambition, Resilience, Collaboration



Teach reading the words oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked.

Teach spelling the words said, so, have, like, some, come, were, there.

Teach reading the words water, where, who, again, thought, through, work, mouse, many, laughed, because, different, any, eyes, friends, once, please.

Teach spelling the words little, one, do, when, what, out.

Teach spelling the words oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked.

Phase 6

In phase 6 children will:

Be introduced to and taught the past tense.

Investigate and learn how to add suffixes.

Be taught how to spell long words.

Be taught how to find and learn the difficult bits in words.

Learn and practise spellings.

For example: The past tense dealt with in this section is simple past tense, e.g. I **looked**, not continuous past tense, e.g. I **was looking**, to reinforce understanding and application of the -ed suffix for the past tense (e.g. **rounded, helped, turned, begged, hissed, wanted, sorted, hummed, waded, washed, hated, greased, lived**)

Strategies

1. Syllables: to learn my word I can listen to how many syllables there are so I can break it into smaller bits to remember (e.g. **Sep-tem-ber, ba-by**)
2. Base words: to learn my word I can find its base word (e.g. **Smiling** – base **smile** + **ing**, e.g. **women** = **wo** + **men**)
3. Analogy: to learn my word I can use words that I already know to help me (e.g. **could**: **would, should**)
4. Mnemonics: to learn my word I can make up a sentence to help me remember it (e.g. **could** – O U Lucky Duck; **people** – people eat orange peel like elephants).

Ways you can support your children at home: reading together



Enjoy and share books together – buy or borrow books that will fire their imagination and interest. Read and reread those they love best.

Let them see you reading – grown-ups can share their magazines about their favourite sport or hobby.

Read with your child – ask your child to attempt unknown words, using their phonic skills and knowledge. Make sure they **blend** all through the word.

Talk about the meaning of the book, too – take time to talk about what is happening in the book, or things that they found really interesting in an information book. Discuss the characters and important events. Ask them their views. Provide toys, puppets and dressing up clothes that will help them to act out stories.

Explain the meaning of words (*vocabulary*) that your child can read but may not understand, for example, *flapped*, *roared*.

Add sound effects when reading a story and encourage your child to join in.

A quiet area with some cushions and toys is a comfortable place where you and your child can go to look at a book together.

Your child will get a login card to access Phonics Bug from home, please use this as it will be regularly updated with appropriate reading and games linked to the sounds they have been learning!



Ways you can support your children at home: writing together

Magic writing boards are great fun for children, both little and larger versions. It won't be long before they will be trying to write their names!



Write with your child – ‘think aloud’ so they can hear the decisions you are making as you write. Make sure the writing is for a purpose, for example, a birthday message, a shopping list, an address.

Talk about the words they see in everyday life – food packaging, signs in the supermarkets, captions on buses and lorries, messages on birthday cards and invitations.

Write a shopping list together.

Send an email to a family member or a friend – your child says the message, you write it!

Provide your child with a shoe box full of things to write with – writing tools of various sizes and thicknesses: gel pens, crayons, glitter pens, rainbow pencils, old birthday cards, coloured paper, sticky tape to make little books. Rolls of wallpaper can be attached to a table or wall to provide a large canvas for their writing and drawing.

Praise them for their play writing – those early squiggles and marks show that your child is beginning to understand writing.

