

Parent Guide



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We are excited to share this content with you. If you are interested in finding more resources made especially for Parents, then check out these links to different areas of the **Twinkl Parents** hub.

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Subject Guides

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Supporting Learning



What is this resource and how do I use it?

Part of a detailed series of resources on 'Supporting Your Child's Learning in Reception', this parent guide gives you an overview of the literacy early learning goals, information on how your child may be taught literacy at school and practical, fun ideas for how you can support them with literacy skills at home.

What is the focus of this resource?

EYFS Framework

Supporting Your Child

Reception

Literacy

Further Ideas and Suggestions

Children usually start phase 2 phonics in reception - you can find out more about phase 2 [here](#). For engaging activities and resources to support your child at home, browse our **Reading** and **Writing** categories. Don't forget to talk, sing and play! These are all crucial to child development.

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Literacy

What is literacy?

Basically, it's reading and writing and everything that goes along with them, such as spelling, handwriting, comprehension, sentence skills, punctuation and grammar. Early literacy skills are some of the most important your child will acquire during their first year at school. The English language is one of the most complicated and difficult to learn in the world, as there are so many different ways of spelling the same sounds – just think of the 'ee' sound in 'bee', 'bead', 'key' and 'lucky'.

In early years, literacy is one of the specific areas of learning and there are three aspects within it:

Comprehension

Word Reading

Writing

The following pages contain more information on each early learning goal and how you can support your child to meet this end of year expectation at home. Visit these areas on the Parents Hub for amazing resources to help you make learning at home fun!

Phonics

Reading

Writing

How will my child be taught literacy in school?

Every school is different so it's best to talk to your child's teacher or look on their website for more information. Most schools will have dedicated time each day for phonics and usually have story time at some point during the day, too. There are likely to be lots of opportunities for your child to draw, read and write throughout the day in both play and adult-led activities, as well as chances for them to tell imaginative stories through role play and small world play. Literacy is not just about sitting with a book - playing with language, listening to others and even digging in the sand are all activities that will support your child with their literacy skills.

Comprehension

Please remember, the early learning goals are the expectation for the end of reception. Your child will be working towards these throughout the year, gradually building on their skills. They don't have to be able to do everything all at once!

How can I support my child at home?

- Set a reading example. Let your child see you reading – anything at all. Studies have shown that it is particularly important for boys to see their dads or other key male figures reading, as boys can become disengaged with books and reading without positive role models.
- Talk, talk, talk with your child - as much as you possibly can. Studies show that children from families where talk features regularly read earlier and have better attainment in school overall.
- Reading is not just about knowing what the words on the page say. It's about developing a love of books and about being able to understand what you are reading. Make sure there are books in your home that your child can access. Join your local library and visit regularly. Encourage your child to look at different books – not just stories but information books, poetry and comics.
- Pose questions about stories, even if they're rhetorical. Say, 'I wonder what will happen next?' or, 'Do you think Little Red Riding Hood will get away?' You can also model using what you know about stories to help your child make links between them, e.g. 'I think the mouse is going to trick the Gruffalo's child like he tricked the Gruffalo!'
- Talk to your child about print in the world around them. If there's a sign that says, 'Caution – wet floor' for example, point it out to your child, tell them what it says and discuss why it's there. Do the same with billboard advertisements, signs in the supermarket, words on road signs etc. Later, see if your child can spot and read any letter sounds or even actual words in the world around them. This gives children a strong message that reading is an important skill and has meaning in everyday life.
- Share books – every day. It is likely your child will bring home a daily reading book from early on in their time at school. Share this with them, read it to them, discuss the plot, characters and settings. Share your child's own favourite books, too. Daily reading with your child is one of the biggest ways in which you can influence their progress at school.
- Play! Make up stories with small world toys or in role play. Use vocabulary from stories your child has heard to encourage them to do the same to build context and understanding around new words.

Early Learning Goal

Children at the expected level of development will:

- demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Word Reading

Early Learning Goal

Children at the expected level of development will:

- say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

How can I support my child at home?

- Word Reading is essentially your child's understanding and application of phonics to be able to read. Your child will be learning letter sounds and how to blend these together to decode words.
- Find out what's happening at school. If your child's school offers parents' sessions explaining how phonics is taught, do all you can to attend. If you can't make it, ask for any handouts or speak to your child's teacher at another time.
- Teach good listening. Most children learn to read by 'sounding and blending' – learning letter sounds then saying them together to make a word, e.g. 'c-a-t – cat'. Continue to develop your child's listening skills (see our [guide to Communication and Language](#) for ideas) to help them develop this skill.
- Practise letter sounds. Your child will begin to learn the letter sounds and how to blend them together early on. If they bring 'sounds' work home, practise with them in fun ways, such as:
 - say the sound in different voices
 - play 'Splat the Sound' (where you have to find the sound on a page of print)
 - help your child gather a collection of objects which begin with the sound
 - play bingo, matching games or snap
 - have a treasure hunt! Make or print CVC word cards (using sounds your child has learnt) and hide them around the house. If you can make them lead to some 'treasure' at the end, even better! For example, you could have sit (sofa) > tap > hot (fireplace or oven) > hat (where you keep the hats!) > pan - with a little treat inside!

Word Reading

An Explanation of the Jargon!

- Phonics – A method for teaching reading and writing by developing a reader’s understanding of the sounds of the letters of the alphabet, both single letters and also sounds made from multiple letters, such as ‘ay’, ‘sh’, ‘ee’, ‘igh’. Children learn the sounds and then learn to ‘blend’ them together to make words – ‘c-a-t makes cat’, ‘sh-ee-p makes sheep’.
- Decoding – The ability to read a word by sounding and blending as above.
- Irregular words – Words that cannot be read by sounding and blending individual letter sounds. Examples include ‘the’, ‘my’, ‘because’ but there are many more. Depending on the phonics scheme used by your child’s school, these may also be known as ‘tricky’ words or ‘red’ words.
- Digraph - Two letters, one sound, e.g. ‘sh’, ‘ch’, ‘ll’.
- Go to our **Phonics** area for more information and support with word reading.

Disclaimer: 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.

The most important thing you can do is make time to listen to, talk with and play with your child. Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones and really engage with them!

How can I support my child at home?

- A child's first writing means a lot to them, if very little to you. If your child produces a page of squiggles, but solemnly tells you it is a shopping list – praise them! They truly believe this is writing, and this is an important step towards learning to write 'properly', because they are seeing the purpose of this skill.
- Later, your child will continue to 'write' but instead of squiggles will use letters they know and have learnt – in any order! Often these are the letters in their name, or new ones from school. Continue to praise and encourage these emerging writing skills.
- Let your child see you writing. Let them help you write a shopping list, a packing list for a holiday, or a postcard home.
- Practise letter formation. Alongside learning the sounds that the letters make, your child will be learning to write them. Developing the correct letter formation now is so important, as children find it hard to 'relearn' this when they come to learn cursive (joined writing). Most schools have a handwriting scheme and children are taught little rhymes or other ways of reminding them how to form a letter. If you're unsure how this has been taught, ask your child's teacher.
- Once your child has begun to learn some sounds, they will want to use them to write words but these will often be misspelt, though still readable. For example, they may write 'hows' instead of 'house', or 'lighc' instead of 'like'. Don't panic – this is an essential step in your child developing confidence as a writer. Once they have learnt the correct spelling for the different sounds, they will begin to use them. Praise these initial efforts at writing. Don't correct them, unless you know that your child should know the correct spelling. If in doubt, ask their teacher.
- Let your child write everywhere! Not just on paper with a pencil. Other great ideas are to write on a wall with water and a paintbrush, to write with a finger in sand or shaving foam on a large tray or plate, and to use a range of different writing tools such as chunky crayons, chalks or felt tips.
- Develop your child's physical skills. Children's strength and control begins in the centre of their body and gradually develops along their limbs as they grow and develop. Gross motor skills come first. This includes big movements such as walking, jumping or lifting. These are followed by fine motor skills which involve smaller movements of the hands, wrists and fingers. See our [guide to Physical Development](#) for some great ideas.

Early Learning Goal

Children at the expected level of development will:

- write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.