

## What does it start with?

You will need:

- ◆ Several items each beginning with a different sound

The idea of this game is to identify the sounds that letters make. Ask your child to choose an object from the box and to tell you what they have chosen, for example 'teddy'.

Then ask them what sound 'teddy' starts with - remember it is the **sound** you are looking for rather than the alphabet name.

You could play this anywhere at any time!

For example, in the car or at bath time, but make it fun!



## Sand Tray or Finger Paints

Children enjoy writing letters with their fingers in a tray of sand or with finger paints. These ideas provide good opportunities to teach correct letter formation.

Try using different materials and textures such as rice, flour or even shaving foam!



## Point out print everywhere

Talk about the written words you see in the world around you. Ask your child to try to spot familiar words on each outing, for example on the walk to school, or park or the shops. It's amazing how many children recognise 'Tesco'.

Encourage them to look for English letters on signs, labels etc.

## Making Sentences

You will know if your child is ready for this if you hear them reading words independently.

This does take a little more preparation but is a good way to challenge your child.

Write out a simple sentence, making sure that you use a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end. It is best **not** to use cursive (or joined up) writing at this stage.

Then cut up each word so it might look like this:



Ask your child if they can make the sentence using the individual words, for example "This is a dog."

If your child makes a mistake, do not say "That's wrong" immediately, because negative comments discourage. Ask your child to read the sentence again and if they don't correct themselves you can give clues such as, "What sound does **dog** start with?"

## Important...

Please remember that all of these activities are only suggestions and not homework. Your child has worked hard at school and we want them to enjoy learning phonics.

The most important message we can give you is to have fun! If they don't want to play any of these games then please don't push it.

## Useful Links

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwJx1NSineE>

# Green Ridge Primary Academy



## Learning Through Play

## Letters and Sounds



## What Is Phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching children how spoken words are composed of sounds.

Children are taught that we can make a word from the sounds and then break it apart again when we want to spell it.

- ◆ The smallest unit of sound that can be spoken or heard such as, 'b' in 'bat' is called a **phoneme**.
- ◆ A letter/s representing a phoneme is called a **grapheme**.  
The grapheme could be 1 letter, 2 letters or more. For example the word 'chin' has 4 letters but 3 graphemes - ch - i - n.
- ◆ When two letters make up a grapheme, for example 'ch' in 'chin', the grapheme is called a **digraph**. Your children may come home telling you the new digraphs they have learned.
- ◆ We use **sound buttons** to identify the graphemes in a word when we are learning to **blend** and **segment**.
- ◆ **Segmenting** is identifying the individual sounds in a spoken word to help with spelling. For example c - a - t and writing down each sound as letters to form the word 'cat'.
- ◆ **Blending** is recognising the letter sounds in a written word e.g. p - a - t and merging them in the order in which they are written to pronounce the word 'pat'.

## Handy tips:

- ◆ It is important for a child to learn lower case or small letters rather than capital letters at first. Obviously you should use a capital letter when required, such as at the beginning of the child's name, e.g. **Sam**.
- ◆ When you talk about letters to your child, remember to use the letter sounds rather than the alphabet names of the letters: **ay bee see dee ee**. The reason for this is that sounding out words is practically impossible if you use the alphabet names. eg. **cat, would sound like: see ay tee**.
- ◆ When saying the sounds of **b, d, g, j, y** and **w** it is important to have a short sharp sound. Have a go and practise!

## Sound games to play at home...

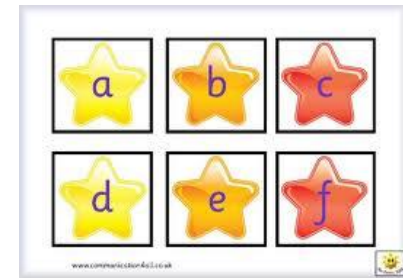
### Playdough

Try using playdough, bread dough or chapatti dough to form letters. Make or print letter mats to give your child a guideline of the formation of the letters.



## Sequencing the letters

Provide your child with letter cards (you could make these as a fun activity) for each letter of your child's name. Remember the capital letter for the first letter and lower case for the rest. Model to your child how to make the name first, then shuffle the cards asking them to have a go. For a very long name, try with a few letters first and then build it up.



## Odd-one out

Say a few words, all beginning with the same sound except one. See if your child can spot the odd one out.

## We went to the supermarket

This game involves taking turns to say 'I went to the supermarket and bought ....' Agree first which sound you are going to use and see how many items you can think of.

For example, if the focus sound is 'c', you might say: 'I went to the supermarket and bought a cabbage'. Then your child might say: 'I went to the supermarket and bought a cat!' What else would you put in your trolley?!