

We hope you had a lovely bank holiday weekend. Last week we continued to enjoy activities linked to types of weather. We shared the story of Noah's Ark. We have also reminded children of the seasons and we talked about the new month of May being on its way and it being late Spring, moving towards Summer. We don't have many children's birthdays in May this year, but we have talked again about our birthday months. A few more children are now confident knowing their month of birth, a few still need to be reminded, but they are getting there. If your child is confident knowing their month you could teach them about the day of the month or even the year.

We have also been revising lots of nursery rhymes and songs. We will continue with this and will also be sharing some more of Aesop's fables about different animals this week. We are also moving on to more thinking about growing in the garden and will be planting some seeds. Last year we planted some sunflower seeds. We were going to try growing something different this year, as we still have a few of those children with us, but the children seem excited about sunflowers, so we will let the children plant one of their own and plant some other seeds in nursery. We will share some stories with sunflowers and look at its lifecycle.

We have been working with the younger children on developing their phonological awareness. The older children have started to work more on phonemic awareness and phonics. Below is some information about the sounds we have been learning. Some of the older children have also enjoyed selecting books to take home and share. We have also added some information about help with early reading.

On Friday to celebrate the coronation the children are welcome to wear special clothes. They can dress as royalty, or wear red, white and blue, or party clothes. We will have a little celebratory tea party at snack time. We will provide some cake. If your child has any allergies or intolerances, or you do not wish for them to have cake please provide an alternative for them, thanks.

Best wishes

Ellie Green & Kelly McIlroy



Building Blocks for Reading

Sounds of the Week

The sounds the older children have learnt so far are m, a, s, and d. This week we will learn t, i, n, p.

Blending

Each phonics session we finish by trying to blend sounds together to hear the word. We have a Fred Frog who can only say the sounds, so we have to work out the word. This may be a game you would like to practise at home. You could have a similar toy, such as robot, who can only do 'Robot talk'.

Blending sounds can be a difficult skill for children to pick up, so it's important to start off small with some words and phrases that they can manage. So, using the sounds we have learnt last week you could try *m-a-d*, *d-a-d*, *s-a-d*, etc. This can initially just be orally. You can just build the skill of blending into everyday life, for example 'Please could you pass the *j-a-m*?' and let the child work it out. If you are not too confident with how to say the sounds, there is a link to a video to help below. Any queries please just ask.

When children have learnt all the phonemes and can match the letters they can start to begin to read. You encourage children to say each sound (phoneme) aloud and then try the word. They will be doing lots of work on this in Reception. For those who might be interested, there is also a link below about how to develop this skill once the children can match phonemes and letters. The set 1 cards are available from school if you would like a set.

How to say the sounds - <https://youtu.be/TkXcabDUg7Q>

Blending - <https://youtu.be/MNyFikwNQTg>

HOW TO HELP WITH READING

If you can spare ten minutes a day to read with your child, you can make a huge difference to their development. You don't have to read a 'reading book' - any book, a comic, or a story you have made up yourself will be beneficial. At this age you just want to make sure that your child gets off to the best possible start. It's all about sharing and enjoying books as well as introducing some of the very first skills of reading.

Top Tips on Sharing Books

Set aside some time every day - Children need to read little and often, so snuggle up with a book or sit at the screen together at a time that works for you both (or all!). Also try to keep a regular slot each day for a special relaxing reading time if possible – we all need that!

Find somewhere quiet without any distractions - Turn off the TV/radio/computer.

You could ask your child to choose a book –Sharing books they have chosen shows you care what they think and that their opinion matters, and they are more likely to engage with the book. Children love to listen to and read their favourite books over and over again and to remember some parts by heart. That's fine as enjoyment and memory play a key part in learning to read. Add to their list of favourites by reading stories of all kinds, rhymes, and poetry, and information books too.

Sit close together - Encourage your child to hold the book themselves and/or turn the pages gently. Where the books have words, following the words with your finger.

Before you start - Before you start reading a book, talk about the title and the pictures on the cover (front and back). Look through the pictures together and ask your child what they think the story might be about.

Point to the pictures - Relate them to something your child knows. Ask them to describe the characters or situation or what will happen next. Encourage them to tell you the story by looking at the pictures. Some of the early reading scheme books have no words. Wordless books often promote more discussion than books with words, which leads to better comprehension. We tend to focus on, and appreciate, the details in the pictures more in these types of books. They also encourage the introduction of new vocabulary and help develop storytelling skills. For *pre-readers*, wordless books give them the opportunity to actually read and understand a book all by themselves.

Join in - Start asking your child to join in with bits that are repeated in stories, e.g., '*Run, run, as fast as you can! You can't catch me I'm the gingerbread man!*' Traditional stories, like The Gingerbread Man, are really good for this and children will love doing the voices!

Encourage your child to talk about the book - Talking about the characters and their dilemmas helps children understand relationships and is an excellent way to get to know each other or discuss issues. Give your child plenty of time to respond. Ask them what will happen next, how a character might be feeling or how the book makes them feel. Sometimes after you have shared a story, ask your child to retell it to you. Help by asking, '*What happened first? What next? And then what? ... Can you remember what happens at the end?*' Encourage them to use plenty of expression.

Don't be afraid to use funny voices - Children love this!

Ask questions - As you read and when you've finished, sometimes ask questions about the story, '*What was your favourite bit? What do you think about that? What would you do?*' Get your child to ask you questions too. Don't overdo it though – otherwise you can lose the thread of the plot.

And lastly and above all - make it fun! It doesn't matter how you read with a child, as long as you both enjoy the time together.

Early Reading Skills

Talk about letters and sounds - If you draw attention to letters and sounds, your child will begin to notice them as well.

Early reading skills – Signs that children are getting ready to learn to read, and to encourage, would be ability to:

- Listen to a story and retell bits of it
- Recognise some letter sounds (like the first sound in their name and other words)
- Recognise his or her own name in writing, perhaps other names and signs
- Match some words (like Mum) when they see them in different places
- Concentrate for 5-10 minutes

