



A Guide to Supporting Your Child with Their Reading at Home 📖 📚

Children: Little Doves News 2020

The MORE that you
READ, the more things
you will **KNOW.**
The MORE that you
Learn, the more places
you'll **GO.**

Dr. Seuss



Notes

This week at Little Doves our children will all be bringing home an Oxford Reading Tree Scheme book alongside their 'borrow book'. These are the first level in the scheme (lilac) and the aim is to get children storytelling, remembering details and answering questions without the pressure of having to decode words as well. Please see the guide below for more information about these books and reading in our Early Years.

Learning to read is one of the most important things your child will do in the Early Years (well, maybe equal with having fun!) but it won't all happen in class: parents/carers need to help at home too.

We've worked hard to bring you our guide to how your child will learn to read at school and what you can do to support this yourself.

How is Reading taught these days? 🤔



The way reading is taught has changed over the years, and the current favoured method in British primaries is through phonics. The Government has backed this approach and it's definitely here to stay for the foreseeable future.

So what is phonics teaching all about then? 🤔

Whereas many of today's parents/carers learned to read whole words using the 'look and say' method, phonics is a systematic approach to teaching children the sounds that make up words. Words are broken down into the sounds they're made up from and then these sounds are 'blended' together to make the word. So, for example, with 'dog', children learn the sounds the letters d-o-g make separately and then how they blend to say 'dog'. Note that it's the sounds the letters make that are important at this stage and not the letter names (i.e. not 'ay', 'bee' as in the alphabet song etc.) Phonics also helps children spell as they can hear the sounds in a word and then translate them back into the letters needed.

How will phonics be taught in my child's class? 🤔

Phonics begins with all the Phase 1 activities linked to listening. Once children have completed Phase 1 we move on to Phase 2. Jolly Phonics is our preferred option for Phase 2, along with the Department of Education's own Letters and Sounds materials. We start off with simpler single letter sounds (typically s,a,t,p,i,n) and then move to those which involve two letters such as 'oi', 'ou' and 'ai', or more e.g. 'igh', 'air' or 'ear'. How quickly children progress through the sounds will vary.

Learning the letter sounds is merely the first step. The really important bit is to teach the children what to do with them - How to blend them together for reading and how to listen for them in a word to spell it. Start simply with CVC words (consonant vowel consonant words, such as cat, hat, hop) and gradually introduce longer and more complex words.

After a while children will start recognising some words automatically and only using phonics decoding to break down new words the first few times. You can't fight against this and as long as they aren't guessing new words incorrectly instead of 'decoding' them, it isn't a bad thing.

What about words which can't be decoded with phonics? 🤔

Some words such as 'no' or 'was' can't be decoded easily, either because a child hasn't covered the more complicated sounds of English yet or where a word is irregular (perhaps those with origins in another language). They might need other strategies to work these words out, including looking at context, sounding out some of the word if part of it is regular and using that to work out the rest of it, and thinking of other words that look the same and could provide clues.

Your child will also receive a list/set of 'tricky words' to learn from school when they know all their Phase 2 letter sounds.

Will my child get reading books in nursery? 🤔

Reading scheme books will be given to nursery children in the after their initial settling in period. Initially these will be picture only books (Lilac). Once your child is ready and they have mastered storytelling with picture books and whilst learning phase 2 Phonics they will progress onto the next stage including words and simple repetitive sentences (Pink). Children usually start these books in Reception but if we feel your child is ready we can start them before.



We usually also have a Reading Record which is sent home with the book but due to COVID restrictions we will simply add an observation on Tapestry with the title - Reading Record 📖 so that you can see what your child has read in school. Please could we ask that you comment on this post. This is designed for parents/carers and school to log reading and communicate on any relevant issues (so a parent/carer might write that their child found a particular book too hard or they struggled with specific words). If you're unsure about how the reading record works then please ask/message the teacher for further guidance.

My child has been sent home with their first book but it only has pictures not words! How on earth will that help them learn to read? 🤔

These wordless picture books are renowned for confusing parents/carers who struggle to see the point of them but we feel that books with no words can prove to be extremely beneficial if discussed and explored at depth with an adult. They're a useful tool to get young children discussing stories and characters. You probably wouldn't want your child doing them for weeks on end, but a few should help their reading comprehension longer term.

When my child can't read a word, should I read it for them? 🤔

It's important to give children some thinking time if they get stuck on a word. Don't jump in too quickly. Obviously you don't want your child to struggle but sometimes adults don't allow enough time for the child to use their problem solving skills. Do help them after a little while though, especially if they start to look frustrated! Remember to help them sound out the word rather than just reading it for them.

How often will they be reading to an adult in school? 🤔

In an ideal world children would be reading to a grown-up every day in school but unfortunately time and resources don't always allow this. They will however be doing some reading of one sort or another daily and reading individually at least once a week.

School doesn't change my child's books very often so they're left with the same one for so long that they lose their enthusiasm! 🤔

There's no harm in re-reading a book – in fact it is beneficial also reading a variety of books from home and school can keep your child interested. Books will be changed weekly on your child's specified reading day but of course we can be flexible with this approach. If your child is becoming disheartened by having the same book for too long, or conversely is feeling pressured by being expected to read a book a night, then by all means mention it to the teacher.

My child is very unenthusiastic about reading – how can I get him/her interested in books? 🤔

The key to success is about engendering a love of books and stories. Perhaps you could always make sure there is time to enjoy a bedtime story together, have story CDs in the car, DVDs of classic tales and make regular visits to the local library. The result of this exposure to books and stories will hopefully be children who can retell favourite stories, have opinions about books and authors, can discuss a range of different stories, and predict what's likely to happen next in a narrative. These skills are vital to future success in school-based literacy learning. Parents/carers being role-models as absorbed and intent readers can demonstrate to children the power and pleasure of reading too.

Alternatively we suggest that it's not just books that will help your child learn to read. Why not encourage them to read magazines, comics, newspapers, TV guides or even cookery books too. They are all valid forms of literature. Reading could also be as simple as reading street names on the walk home, packets in the supermarket... anything! The most important thing about reading is that your child is enjoying it!



One tactic worth trying if you have the time, is to write a few simple stories 'starring' your child and/ or on a subject close to their heart. If they're a train enthusiast, write a little tale of them going on a train somewhere using appropriately simple language. It doesn't need to be the next prize-winning novel - just 10 sentences. You could even ask him them to illustrate it for you with some pictures of their own.

How can I help ensure my child actually understands what they're reading? 🤔

Comprehension is absolutely key. Even if your child can 'decode' the words on a page and read them out loud, it doesn't mean they'll truly take in what's going on. If they don't understand the story, then they will struggle to enjoy reading.

To help with this, make sure you don't just listen to your child read - ask them some questions about the book too and make observations yourself. Alternatively, you could make up your own versions of what could happen next in a story you are sharing. Talk about what the author decided. What else could have happened?" Please note that some of our reading scheme books have comprehension questions inside the front and back cover.

How do I know if a book is too easy or too difficult? 🤔

As your child is learning to read, their books should have a small amount of challenge, but not be so difficult that they are struggling regularly throughout the story. Just enough reading work consolidates children's existing reading skills - too much reading work and the reading process breaks down. Books that are too difficult will not accelerate reading progress - in fact these may turn emergent readers into reluctant readers. For newer readers, a rule of thumb often used is that they should be able to read 90% of the words.

If a book is a little too difficult or your child is tired maybe you could share out the reading by taking it in turns to read. For example, you could read a page, paragraph or sentence each. Remember to be supportive even when they are struggling: Really praise your child for all of the words that they are getting correct. When you're learning to read in the beginning each new word read is a huge step.

We appreciate that this is a lot of information to process. Please remember that you can speak to the Little Doves Nursery Class staff anytime if you have any queries. 😊