Little Wandle Foundations

Foundations for Phonics

Getting ready for Reception

The Nursery years are the best time to lay the foundations for your child's future reading. By spending time talking with your child and focusing on the sounds of our language, you can help your child get ready for formal phonics teaching in Reception.

Research tells us that children will become better readers if they can recognise and play around with the following aspects of language:

- rhyming words
- syllables within words
- the first sound that words begin with
- the sounds within words (for example, knowing that the word 'cat' is made of the sounds c-a-t).

Little Wandle Foundations for Phonics supports Nursery practitioners to develop these skills with your child. Read on to find out how you can help at home!

Phonological skills and their role in learning to read: A meta-analytic review. (2012) Melby-Lervag, M. et al.



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How can I help my child listen?

- Listening is a skill that can be practised and improved!
- Use your child's name to make sure they know you are talking to them.
- Point out sounds around you and describe them – for example, "Listen to the birds tweeting. They are high up so you need to listen carefully!"

How can I help my child with rhyming?

- Children naturally love rhyme, and research tells us that it really helps them get ready for reading.
- Sing nursery rhymes and rhyming songs every day. Which song is your child's favourite?
- Pause before the rhyming word to encourage your child to join in, for example, "Hickory, dickory dock, the mouse ran up the … [clock]."
- Make up nonsense rhymes with names and words, for example, "Mummy, tummy, lummy, fummy!"

How can I help my child with syllables?

- Syllables are units of sound, grouped together around a vowel.
- Words are broken up into syllables, for example, the word 'crocodile' has three syllables – croc-o-dile.
- Being able to hear syllables helps children with their future spelling.
- Count syllables with your child.
- Whose name in your family has the most syllables?

How can I help my child hear sounds within words?

- The smallest units within words are the individual sounds. Children need to be able to hear these sounds so they can match them to letters when they start phonics in Reception.
- Start by drawing attention to the first sound in a word, for example, "Look at the dog! Dog starts with 'd'."
- Play with alliteration (words starting with the same sound). For example, you could sing familiar nursery rhymes but change the words so they all start with the same sound – "Binkle binkle bittle bar, bow by bunder bot boo bar!"
- Break down words into their sounds and see if your child can put the sounds together to make the word, for example, "Go and get your c-oa-t. C-oa-t. That's right, c-oa-t, coat!"