

## Getting Your Child Reading Ready



### Help them Develop a Love of Books and Reading

Spend time with books - start with just picture books- engage with your child and enjoy the story even if it is just pictures. Talk about the pictures encourage your child to look for detail on the page. Can you spot the dog, cloud, or spider? Looking for detail is great preparation for later reading words. Don't try to teach your child to read through this just have fun with the story.

Make reading a special time when they have your undivided attention - if they associate reading with time spent with a parent they are likely to feel very positively about books.

### Concentrate on Lower Case

As a phonics trainer I would generally advise parents to avoid 'teaching' the alphabet but as a realist I know that there are lots of times it comes up, from friendly relatives seeking to help to children's programmes on television. If you buy anything like magnetic letters make sure you pick lower case - after all that is usually how we will write. When you talk about sounds in the alphabet use the lower case sounds 'a' NOT 'A'. Also be sure you pronounce the sounds precisely - if you are not sure then follow this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwJx1NSineE>

### Developing Auditory Discrimination

Before children learn to read they first need to learn to hear and discriminate the sounds in the language. In every society children learn to speak - it is a natural part

of development. Reading however is an add-on - something that not every child has to learn because reading is not part of every society and historically wasn't part of ours.

In order to read and write they need to hear the sounds in the language. Think about how you would spell 'cat'. You would say the sounds in the word 'c' 'a' 't' and when you can identify the sounds then providing you know how we represent the sound 'c' (and there are a few ways of spelling this sound 'c' 'k' and 'ck' for example) then writing the word is easy.

So in terms of making sure children are ready to read one of the best things parents can do is help them develop good auditory discrimination skills. For games to help develop these skills follow this link

<http://attunededucation.com/2016/10/11/games-to-develop-auditory-discrimination/>

### **Develop the right 'language'**

Try to develop accurate language to talk about reading and spelling. Talk about 'sounds' and talk about letters representing or spelling the different sounds rather than 'making' sounds. After all no letter makes a sound - we do that with our mouths when we read the letters and say the sounds they represent. Its also helpful to acknowledge that there are different ways that sounds may be spelt. There are 26 letters in the alphabet and about 44 sounds so sounds can be spelt with one or more letters AND some letters or groups of letters can represent more than sound, for example the letter 'c' can be /k/ like in cat or /s/ like in city, 'ow' represents a different sound in cow that it does in show. There also often different ways of spelling a particular sound 'c' 'k' and 'ck' all spell the 'c' sound as in cat. Similarly 'o' 'ow' 'o-e' 'ou' and 'ough' can spell the same sound as in **so, show, bone, soul** and **dough**.

### **Understand the skills and concepts readers need to learn**

To be an effective reader a child needs to develop the skills of

- Blending - pushing sounds together to read a word
- Segmenting - separating the sounds in a word - useful for spelling
- Manipulate the sounds in a word - useful for spelling.

They also need to learn four concepts

- Letters are symbols that represent sounds
- Sounds may be spelt with 1,2,3 or 4 letters
- The same sound may be spelt in more than one way

- One spelling can represent more than one sound - the 'o' in hot and no, same spelling different sound.

In addition to the skills and concepts they need to be taught the code explicitly. The code is simply the spellings (often more than one) that we have for the sounds we use in our language.

### **Keep an eye on your child's progress**

When you choose a school for your child there are usually a lot of things to take into consideration. As reading effectively is fundamental to later educational success I would suggest that you find out HOW reading is taught. Make sure the school uses an embedded phonic approach and uses a particular programme - like Sounds-write. It's worth checking out how well children in the school do at the phonic screening test the national average for children achieving the expected standard in year 1 was 77% in 2015 rising to 80% in 2016. If the school scores are lower than this I'd ask a few questions.

For more information about phonics visit [www.sounds-write.org](http://www.sounds-write.org) or to discuss any aspect of reading or phonics and to get help for a child who is struggling with reading, writing or phonics contact us [info@attunededucation.com](mailto:info@attunededucation.com)