

Some ideas for helping  
your child at home.



Reception  
November 2019



## HELPING YOUR CHILD



### Reading activities

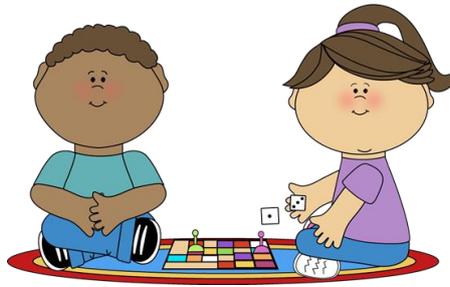
*Reading with your child is vital. Research shows that it's the single most important thing you can do to help your child's education. It's best to read little and often, so try to put aside some time for it every day at a time when there are no distractions.*

1. Read stories to your child - you want your child to learn how enjoyable books can be. Find somewhere comfortable together to share the books. Talk about the pictures/characters and what is happening, how characters might be feeling, as well as actually reading the story. Make story time a special time of the day. Try to turn off the television and minimise background noise.
2. Ask your child to re-tell a well-known story to you using the pictures. Act it out using funny voices, or even think of alternative endings/character names. This will encourage storytelling skills and creativity.
3. Visit the library and take out some non-fiction and fiction books. Look at the differences between fiction and non-fiction such as the layout and the way the text is written. Help your child to 'navigate' around a non-fiction book.
4. Play games such as 'I spy', using the correct articulation of sounds.
5. Go on a tricky word hunt – hide the tricky words around the house and ask your child to find a certain one, or play snap with tricky words.
6. Read poems and sing nursery rhymes. Identify the rhyming words or the descriptive language that creates a picture in your child's head. Use pictures as a stimulus for discussion thinking about descriptive phrases.
7. Display an alphabet chart in your child's bedroom and say the letter names each evening. Sing the alphabet song and point to the letters as you do so. Identify the 5 vowels, and the consonants. Compare capital letters with the lower case letters and ensure children know they both say the same sound.
8. Look out for environmental print, eg. read street signs, identify logos on the sides of lorries, read notices and labels in the supermarket.
9. Play Phase 3 games on [www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk) reading real and not real words. Let your child segment and blend the words independently, then discuss if they are a real word or not.
10. Read anything and everything! eg. food packets, newspapers, comics, road names, signs on buses.



## Writing activities

1. Don't correct spelling! Allow your child to write down the sounds they can hear, rather than worrying about getting it 'right'. As your child becomes more confident and their use of phonics increases, the correct spelling will happen automatically once they have learnt the alternative spellings later in the year.
2. Allow your child to be the teacher and play schools. Pretend that you are unsure how to write words and allow your child to take the lead in showing you.
3. Encourage your child to draw, colour and write. Have a selection of different writing media around the house, eg. pencils, wax crayons, felt pens, chalk. Take a clip board to use in the car on long journeys.
4. Encourage your child to write their own birthday cards and notes to family and friends.
5. Draw a picture and write a sentence about something and then send it to a grandparent.
6. Let your child help you write shopping lists or notes for siblings or grandparents.
7. Use post-its to write some labels around the house, eg. bed, chair, sink, bath.
8. Use magnetic letters on the fridge and encourage your child to make up some simple words whilst you are in the kitchen together. Try to make a rhyming string, eg. mat, fat, cat, splat.
9. Use the computer keyboard so children recognise that capital letters make the same sound as lower case letters. Discuss when we might use capital letters, eg. names, at the beginning of a sentence.
10. Use photographs of places you have visited to generate lots of discussion. Encourage your child to write about the photograph saying where they have been and what they have done.
11. Keep a diary when you go out for the day or go on holiday. Stick tickets and leaflets into a scrapbook and label the items. Encourage them to write about their day but don't write for your child and let them copy underneath; they won't be applying their phonic skills or learning for themselves if you do. Do model the correct letter formation though.



## Maths activities

1. Play board games that require throwing a dice and counting spaces, eg. snakes and ladders, ludo. Children begin to learn how to 'count on' by doing this, as well as developing addition skills if you use 2 dice.
2. Play dominoes. Play the traditional matching game, but also ask questions such as, 'How many different ways can you make 7 with a domino?' Then challenge your child to find all the different ways. Generate number sentences using the spots on dominoes, both addition and subtraction.
3. Ask your child to set the table. (Count the cutlery as they do so in 2's). Ask questions such as 'How many more will we need?'
4. Count the stairs as you go upstairs to bed, and count backwards as you come down again put the numerals on each stair so they can see the written number too. Start counting from different numbers each time.
5. Put an analogue clock on your child's bedside table. Talk about the numbers on the clock, and talk about what time it is concentrating on o'clock and half past. Refer to times as you do different activities to develop children's sense of 'time'. Let your child wear a watch with numbers on, and encourage them to tell the time.
6. Ask your child to count out a certain number of objects and then pass them to you, e.g. clothes pegs, mushrooms for dinner etc.
7. Set your child a challenge before you can count backwards from 10 or 20. E.g. Do a simple jigsaw, do 10 jumps. Ask your child to count backwards whilst you do a challenge. Use sand or digital timers to time things as well.
8. Point out the numbers on a telephone or mobile phone, encourage your child to memorise their phone number and home address.
9. Use different containers in the bath, or paddling pool, to support the concept of capacity. Pour water from one jug or bottle to another; discuss the concepts of full, empty, half full, half empty. Begin to predict which container will hold more or less and how you could check.
10. Talk about and compare things that illustrate concepts of full and empty (volume), light and heavy (weight) and long and short (length). Give your

child a straw, for example, and ask them to find something longer or shorter than the straw.

11. Are big things always heavy? How could you test that theory? Ask lots of questions that require children to problem solve and predict ideas. Then test those ideas out!
12. Let your child handle money and work out how much each coin is worth. Spend pocket money in a real or pretend shop and let them pay. Concentrate on using 1p and 2p coins initially and calculating small amounts up to 10p.
13. Point out the different 2D and 3D shapes to be found around your home. Can you see shapes in the environment? Look at brick patterns, windows, the shape of paving slabs and food containers etc.
14. Let your child help you with cooking activities. Show them how important it is to measure the quantities, count baking cases or spoons of sugar.
15. Let your child help you with washing activities – ask them to pair the socks for you and begin to count in 2's. Sort items according to different criteria such as size or colour.
16. Develop the ability to estimate; ask your child to guess how many cars they have or how many sweets in a packet, for example. Always count them out together afterwards to check how close they were, reinforcing that estimating is having a 'sensible guess'.
17. Identifying problems and solving them can also help your child develop maths skills. If you see them puzzling over something, talk about the problem and try to work out the solution together.
18. Practise writing numbers as well as letters. Label how many you have left of something.
19. Cut sandwiches or fruit into halves, reinforcing that a half is 2 equal parts.
20. Share items between different amounts of people, eg. 12 grapes between 4 plates. How many will each person get? Will it be fair if ... gets more? What happens if there is 1 left over, how could we solve that?

***Asking questions is the key to mathematical understanding – get children thinking for themselves!***