



One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the ability to communicate with the world in which they live. This starts from the day they are born with their very first cry and continues until they are able to use their skills to communicate with others, to find out about things and to make sense of new experiences. Speaking and listening, reading and writing are some of the skills we help the children to develop in school.

If a child is to succeed and get the best out of their education, it is vital they learn to use their language skills confidently. These play a crucial role in allowing the children to learn in all areas of the curriculum. For example, we need to be able to understand what we read and be able to put our ideas into words on paper whatever the subject we are studying. As a child gets older, they use these skills more and more, so the more competent a child is with language skills, the better they learn.

Four and five-year old children develop the early skills they need largely through their play and we therefore use play as the basis of much of our work in Reception. Activities such as writing a shopping list, laying the table, pretending to be a Doctor or to make a phone call, help a child to interact with others, to put their thoughts and ideas into words and to develop their thinking skills. Adding opportunities to practise writing and reading as part of the game encourages the children to use the new things they are learning.

As parents you can help us to develop these skills with your child through the everyday situations that arise at home. Through playing with your child, listening and talking about what they are doing, and encouraging them to use their new skills, you can help them to make sense of what they are learning. We hope that the ideas in this booklet will support you in making the best of these opportunities.

Literacy Targets – Reception

Every child learns in different ways and often at different rates. By supporting and encouraging them at the early stages we can make sure everyone succeeds. By the end of their Reception Year we hope that each child will have reached these targets.

1. Speak in small and large groups confidently, using a growing vocabulary and expressing their ideas to both adults and children.
2. Sit quietly and listen to instructions, nursery rhymes, stories and each other.
3. Join in with a range of nursery rhymes and begin to create their own.
4. Know how to use a book and to read familiar stories with confidence.
5. Have a bank of known stories that s/he can join in with and begin to make up own stories.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of what has been read by retelling stories using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
7. Anticipate what might happen next in a story.
8. Be able to read and spell a bank of high-frequency words, other familiar words and their own name.
9. Know the sounds and names of all letters in the alphabet and recognise rhyming words.
10. Sound out words using their knowledge of the sounds letters make.
11. Hold a pencil correctly and be able to write all letters in the alphabet, with the correct letter formation.
12. Hear and write the sounds in words.
13. Understand how we can use writing and be able to express their own ideas so that it makes sense.

As each child is different, it is important that we do not compare their progress with others as this will only make it harder for a child to feel successful and confident.



Developing Speaking and Listening Skills

- Talk and describe lots of different activities and objects, both in the home and outside.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and to answer questions.
- Ask your child lots of open-ended questions such as: what are you doing; what did you see; what's that for?
- Ask your child's opinion on his/her favourite things, or about stories and television programmes.
- Encourage your child to use new words they have learnt correctly.
- Listen to sounds around you. How many can you hear?
- Encourage your child to sit for longer periods of time on one activity.
- Make up stories together.



Stories and Rhymes

Throughout the year we use some key stories as starting points for our work. You can support your child by helping him/her to develop a good knowledge of the following stories:

- The Gingerbread Man
- Owl Babies
- We are going on a Bear Hunt
- The Three Little Pigs
- Jack and the Beanstalk
- Little Red Riding Hood
- The Three Billy Goats Gruff
- Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Developing Reading Skills

- Share books, comics, magazines and catalogues together.
- Read familiar books over and over again. Talk about what you have read.
- Encourage your child to hold books, turn the pages and use the pictures to pretend that s/he is reading the story.
- Play I Spy games to reinforce letter sounds ('b' as in 'bus').
- Read signs and notices to your child.
- Point out to your child objects which start with the letter sounds we are learning in school.
- Join the library.
- Allow your child to see you reading and to see how much enjoyment you get from reading.
- As your child begins to learn their high-frequency words, look for them in story books or even in the newspaper. Have fun highlighting them. Make up sentences using a chosen high-frequency word, as this gives meaning to the word.



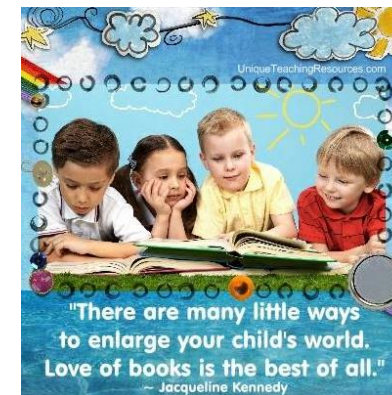
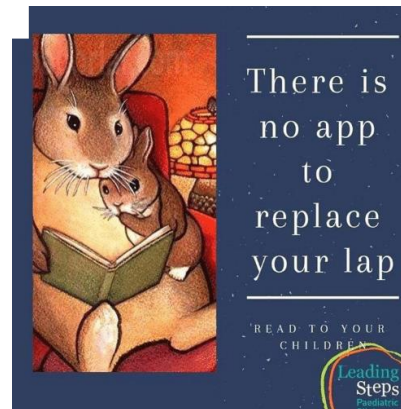
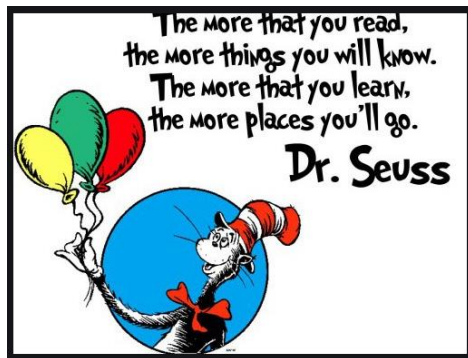
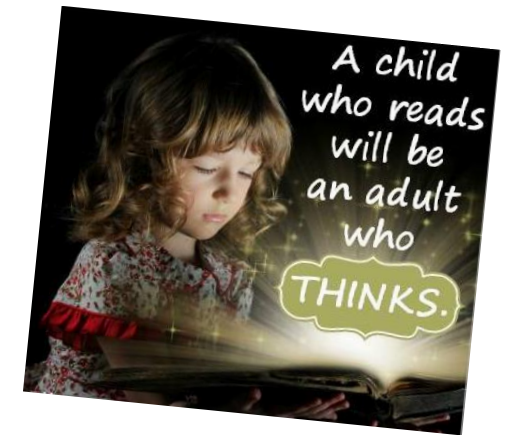
High-Frequency Words - Reception



We will be giving the children these words to learn as part of their reading and writing activities, but we hope you will help your child to learn them at home. In the Autumn and Spring terms we focus on reading the words and in the Summer term we focus on spelling the words. In their reading the children need to know these words as 'sight' words – that means that they will not need to sound them out, rather they will 'just know them'.

the	and	a	to	said	in	he	I
of	it	was	you	they	on	she	is
for	at	his	but	that	with	all	we
can	are	up	had	my	her	what	there
out	this	have	went	be	like	some	as
so	not	then	were	go	little	has	no
mum	one	them	do	me	down	dad	big
when	it's	see	looked	very	look	don't	come
will	into	back	children	from	him	Mr	get
just	now	oh	about	came	their	people	got
your	put	could	house	old	too	by	day
made	time	I'm	if	help	Mrs	called	here
asked	off	saw	make	an	once	friends	says
where	who	because	full	love	any	again	

The more children's books in the home, the further the child goes in school. It does not matter who you are, where you come from, or what your parents do; research shows that the more age-appropriate books in children's homes, the more schooling they will finish. So, get as many books as you can for your children, and watch them learn and grow.



If you and your kids read just one book a day together, they will have enjoyed **1,825** books by their 5th birthdays.

WHY READ FOR 20 MINUTES A DAY?		
PUPIL A	PUPIL B	PUPIL C
20 MINUTES PER DAY	5 MINUTES PER DAY	1 MINUTE PER DAY
1,000,000 WORDS PER YEAR	282,000 WORDS PER DAY	8,000 WORDS PER YEAR
SCORES IN THE 90 TH PERCENTILE ON STANDARDISED TESTS	SCORES IN THE 50 TH PERCENTILE ON STANDARDISED TESTS	SCORES IN THE 10 TH PERCENTILE ON STANDARDISED TESTS



ONCE UPON A TIME ...



Alongside practising their sounds and high-frequency words every day, young children need **daily** stories to help build up their vocabulary, develop their understanding of story structure, increase their ability to focus on a task, as well as to start to develop a love of books.

Tips on reading with reception-aged learners

Make time. Set aside ten minutes a day where you sit together and read a story. This will help your child to understand the concept of reading for pleasure.

Bring the story to life. Don't just use your voice – use your hands and face, make animal sounds, shout, laugh, hoot! Your child will love it if you make the story more expressive.

Use the illustrations (pictures). The illustrations in a picture book are just as important to the story as the text (writing). When you are reading aloud, show your child how the illustrations add to the story; it is good experience for when your child is a bit older and thinking more about the different elements of a great story.

Support your child's phonics learning. Even when you are reading for pleasure, keep in mind that everything you are doing will support your child's reading skills; your child may be able to identify high-frequency words in the writing.

Get your child to join in. Picture books are meant to be shared – make the most of it! Whichever story you chose, there's bound to be plenty of ways for your child to join in, whether that's through him/her joining in with the repetitive text or acting out certain scenes.

BookTrust's best children's books for ages 0 - 5.

(www.booktrust.org.uk)

Julia Donaldson – Room on the Broom
Judith Kerr – The Tiger who came to Tea
Eric Hill – Where's Spot?
Allan Ahlberg – Each Peach Pear Plum
Allan Ahlberg – The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters
Eric Carle – The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Elfrida Vipont – The Elephant and the Bad Baby
Shirley Hughes – Dogger
Oliver Jeffers – Lost and Found
Emily Gravett – Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears
Lauren Child – I will NOT ever never eat a tomato
Raymond Briggs – The Snowman
Mem Fox – Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes
Rod Campbell – Dear Zoo
Anthony Browne – Gorilla
Michael Rosen – We're Going on a Bear Hunt
David McKee – Not now, Bernard
Maurice Sendak – Where the Wild Things are
John Klassen – I want my Hat Back
Dr. Seuss – The Cat in the Hat
Dr. Seuss – Green Eggs and Ham
Helen Nicholl – Meg and Mog
John Burningham – Would you rather...
John Burningham – Granpa
Babette Cole – Princess Smartypants
Tony Ross – I Want My Potty
Lynley Dodd – Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy

Developing Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are those that involve a refined use of the small muscles which control the hand, fingers and thumb. With the development of these skills, a child is able to complete important tasks such as writing, using a knife to cut up his/her food, doing up buttons and zips. These abilities gradually develop through experience and exposure to a variety of toys, materials and even foods.

Why is fine motor skill development important? Little hands need to develop dexterity and strength. Parents and carers can help this process by encouraging children to play, explore and interact with a variety of items. Toys, clothing fasteners, safe scissors and play dough are all tactile examples of practices that facilitate fine motor development. Even doing age appropriate tasks in the kitchen are great ways to help build fine motor skills.

Look for opportunities throughout the day for your child to manipulate small items, push and pull with his/her hands and fingers and practice small movements. Being aware of these opportunities is the first step in helping your child develop fine motor skills.

Creative Activities to Develop Hand Strength

Shonette Bason does 'dough disco' – a great way to develop strong fingers.

Give it a try! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-IfzeG1aC4>

You could even make your own dough!

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>



Gloop is another great activity:

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2012/05/24/playing-with-gloop/>



Hand Strengthening Activities (use writing hand)

Choose one of the activities. Set a timer for one minute - off you go! Don't stop until the timer stops.

Repeat for three or four different activities - if your fingers ache, they are getting stronger!

- 😊 Squeeze a soft sponge in the **palm** of your hand.
- 😊 Pinch and seal a zip lock bag to close it.
- 😊 Turn coins from heads to tails and vice versa.
- 😊 Pinch play-doh with your thumb, index and middle fingers. Poke the play-doh with individual fingers.
- 😊 Put an elastic band around the fingers and thumb. Open and close fingers to stretch the band.
- 😊 Open and close a clothes peg.
- 😊 Touch the pads of each finger to the thumb of the same hand.
- 😊 Squeeze a stress ball.
- 😊 Squeeze, prod and roll play-doh.
- 😊 Use your thumb, index and middle fingers to spin a coin sideways and towards the palm.
- 😊 Put an elastic band around a pair of scissors [to keep the tension consistently tight] and open and close the scissors.
- 😊 Play pencil tug of war with a friend. Hold the pencil with your thumb, index and middle fingers.

You will find more activities if you do an internet search for strong finger activities or funky fingers.

Writing Letters

Developing Writing Skills

Encourage your child to make patterns and shapes in the air. This will help him/her to practise the arm and hand movements needed for writing. Also playing with play-doh and clay strengthens the muscles in the fingers and this helps your child to develop stamina when writing.

Before they can write letters, children need to know how to hold a pencil correctly and have some control over the marks they make. Drawing, tracing and colouring pictures helps this to develop. Encourage them to complete join the dot activities, colour and trace pictures and copy patterns.



Please encourage your child to hold their writing tool with the correct grip.



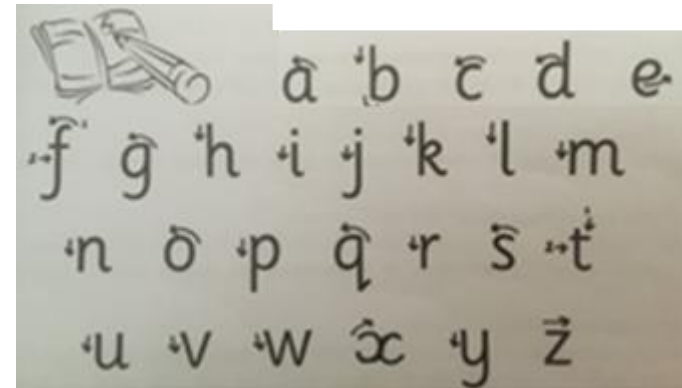
Crayons and pencils should be held lightly between the first finger and thumb, about 2cms from the point of the pencil. Make sure your child holds their pencil correctly and is forming the letters in their name the right way. Please only use a capital letter for the first letter of their name, and lower case letters for all the other letters. Bad habits formed early on are harder to correct.

Using the letters in their name is a good starting point for more formal writing. Practise using the correct starting points and directions.

Allow your child to use a variety of paper and writing tools such as crayons, felt pens, paint, pencils and pens.

Children need lots of practice in Reception to teach them how to write letters correctly. Learning the correct starting points and direction of the letters now helps them to have a neat, joined handwriting style as they get older.

In school we write our letters like this:



This guide is for right handed writers. Left handed writers will cross their 'f' and 't' letters from right to left. Please try to use this style of letters when writing with your child at home. Most letters, except 'f' and 't', are written in a single stroke, without taking the pencil off the paper until the letter formation is complete. The hardest stroke for children to perfect is the 'up and round' anti-clockwise motion required for the curly family of letters (c, o, a, d, g and q) as they have a natural tendency to curl down from the starting point.

In the early stages of children's writing we focus on lower case letters. Please help your child by not writing their name in capitals (just the first letter).

Let your child see you writing lists, letters and notes to help them understand why we write. Share what you have written with your child so that they begin to understand that writing has a purpose.

Encourage your child to 'write' their own letters, lists, card, etc. Praise the writing *whatever* it looks like.