

Letters and Sounds

Phase 1 Developing listening skills. Before children can access letters and sounds, they need to be good listeners. Good listening means they are able to hear the individual sounds in words.

Aspect 1 - Listening skills

Listening walks

This is a listening activity that can take place indoors or outdoors. Remind the children about the things that good listeners do (e.g. keep quiet, have ears and eyes ready). Invite the children to show you how good they are at listening and talk about why listening carefully is important. Encourage the children to listen to the sounds around them. Talk about the different sounds they can hear.

After the children have enjoyed a listening walk indoors or outdoors, make a list of all the sounds they can remember. The list can be in words or pictures and prompted by replaying sounds recorded on the walk.

Mrs Foster has a box

In a box hide place between four and six familiar noisy items (e.g. a set of keys, crisp packet, squeaky toy) into the box, pausing to name them and demonstrate the sound each one makes. Sing to the tune of 'Old MacDonald' but using your own name or one of the children's:

Mrs...has a box ee i ee i o And in that box she has a... Stop.

Ask the children to listen, can they guess which object you've just made the sound of?

Take it in turns to the children get to be the 'Teacher'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOKp_J9kvNM

Aspect 2 - Instrumental Sounds

Play with musical instruments listening to the different sound they make - use describing words to develop vocabulary loud, soft etc.

Make your own instruments using junk modelling. Make your own outdoor instruments using sticks or spoons to find different sounds in the garden or out for a walk.

Aspect 3 - Body Percussion

Making sounds with our own bodies. What different sounds can you make, can you make a pattern.

This is the children's favourite body percussion game to play in school:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNjcdfZu3c0>

Aspect 4 - Rhyming

This is the trickiest aspect of phonics - some children will 'get' rhyming immediately, others will take time and some will never get it. This is nothing to worry about it is just the way some brains are wired.

Read lots of stories, pointing out rhyming pairs. Create rhyming strings you say one word the child rhymes it and you say another word that rhymes see how many words you can say in a row that rhyme.

Rhyming lotto/board games are always good to have at home.

<https://www.education.com/game/match-rhyming-words/>

Aspect 5 - Alliteration (words that begin with same letter)

Alien words

Draw aliens or print some to colour in. Give the aliens silly names that all begin with the same letter for example You ying ya ya, or Him hum hap ho. Encourage the children to make up the silliest name, emphasise the first letter of each word. You could even write them down to show the children that the same letter is at the beginning of each word.

Musical corners

Put a chair in each corner of the room. Collect four sets of objects, each set containing objects with names that start with the same sound. Ie. Car, cat cup, doll, dog, dinosaur.

Label each of the chairs with the letter sound - don't expect the children to know these but it's a good starting point for matching letters to words. Play some music and when the music stops show them an object - which chair does it need to sit on?

Take care to whisper when modelling quiet sounds. Do not add an 'uh' to the end of sounds: 'ssss' not 'suh', 'mmm' not 'muh', 't' not 'tuh', 'sh' not 'shuh'.

Aspect 6 - Voice Sounds

Mouth movements - This aspect is particular good for those children who struggle to say certain sounds.

Explore different mouth movements with children – blowing, sucking, tongue stretching and wiggling. Practising these movements regularly to music can be fun and helps children with their articulation.

Show children how they can make sounds with their voices, for example:

- Make your voice go down a slide – wheee!
- Make your voice bounce like a ball – boing, boing
- Sound really disappointed – oh
- Hiss like a snake – ssssss
- Keep everyone quiet – shshshsh
- Gently moo like a cow – mmmoooo
- Look astonished – oooooo!
- Be a steam train – chchchchch
- Buzz like a bumble bee – zzzzzzz
- Be a clock – tick tock.