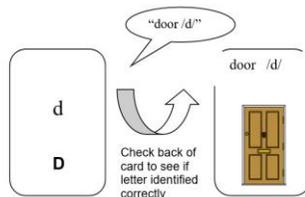


## Helping your child at the early stages of literacy with letter learning, reading and writing simple words and sentences

You will need: magnetic letters, card, paper, coloured pencils/felt tips

### Phonics

- Reading letters - Make a card with the letter on one side and a picture of an object (a word) that begins with that letter e.g A a (one side) and your child can draw an apple for example on the other. Let them choose what they want to draw, as long as it is correct, as this will be more memorable for them. See below.



Every day, go through these cards with your child to check that they know the letter sound and name. So they will say: e.g. Dd (name) and/or (sound) for door, Aa (name) and/or (sound) for ant, etc....

Only make a new card when your child knows the others letter name and sound of all other cards. Practice and revisit all the letters each day.

- Writing letters – using the letters on the cards, ask your child to write the letters on a piece of paper when you give them the sound.  
Help them to form them correctly.  
If they can't remember what the letter looks like, you can say: "it's 'd' for door, remember? Can you remember that card and the letter?" or draw it in the air for them or on the table to give them a clue.  
If your child does struggle with remembering what the letter looks like, you might want to practice the same letter until they know it well without any help rather than moving on to a new letter.
- Practicing letter formation: as your child forms the letter, encourage them to say the letter at the same time. Draw a dot so they know where to start.



- Revising letters and learning the alphabet: use magnetic letters and get your child to put them in the correct order in the shape of an arc. Get them to point to the letters and say the letter name or sound as they move along. (**lmnop** often becomes muddled so watch out for that!)
- Making words: from the Alphabet Arc use the magnetic letters to try to make simple words (cvc words such as 'hot, cup, dog, etc...'). Ask them to say the word first, then to sound it out, then find the letters. When the word is made, say the letter sounds again, and say the word. Repeat until this skill is smooth and secure.

## **Reading**

Using the books suggested by school (this should be the very early reading books with only one (or two) lines of writing per page and lots of repetition).

Teach your child to:

- Point at the words as they reads (they must do this, not the adult and it must be very precise)
- sound out the cvc words to blend and read them on their own
- if they can't sound it out, can they guess what the word might be from the picture or the meaning (what would make sense?)
- use the magnetic letters to make the word – does that help?

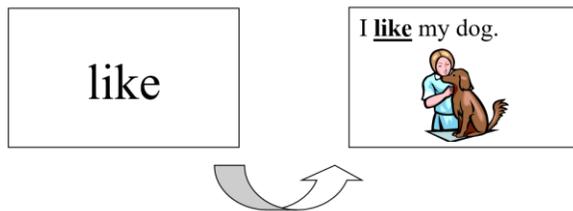
Cut-up sentence:

- Choose a sentence from your child's book.
- Write it on a strip of paper.
- Cut up the sentence into separate words – your child should read them as you cut the next word off the strip.
- Mix up the words for them to put them back in the correct order.
- Remind them to leave a space between each word, but the full stop sticks to the end of the last word.
- (If they make a mistake when ordering the words, leave them to carry on to see if they correct it on their own or realises when they read it at the end. Help them to correct it if they don't realise.  
You might say: Let's have a look at the letter at the beginning of this word .... Does the word ... begin with .... Is this right? Let's have another look.)
- Ask them to re-read the sentence pointing at each word as they read and checking it is correct.
- Ask them to read it again, quicker and with a good reading voice. We want good fluency and good expression.

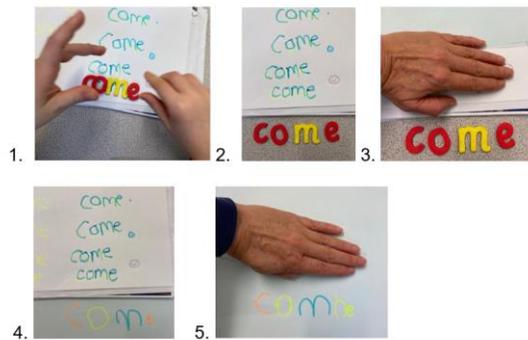


### Reading high frequency words (sometimes called tricky words or Red words)

- words such as 'the, in, on, at, come, here, like, am, and, to, was, look, I, said, go, you, she'.
- Your child needs to be able to read all these without sounding them out – just 'look and say'. Like the letters, make the cards with word on one side and your child draws a picture on the other. The adult might want to write the word and sentence so it is clear.



- Just teach one new word at a time until she knows it, but check/practice every word card you have made every day to overlearn and revisit.
- Another way to learn the word is using magnetic letters is (and this approach is really effective):



1. Make the word using magnetic letters on top of the written word
2. Make the word with magnetic letters underneath
3. Can they make it again if the word is hidden?
4. Overwriting the word and copying underneath
5. Can they do it from memory?
6. Can they make the word again tomorrow, though you might not need to go through each of those stages again, you will need to decide where to start – possibly make the word with magnetic letters underneath once, then from memory, then write it from memory.
7. Repeat this routine until they know the word (not necessarily one word per week, you may need to work on it for longer). When you feel they know it, move on to another word, but revisit this word quickly every day.

### Writing:

- Talk about something you did together, look at a picture, look at a book, talk about a TV programme or use an idea from the work your child is doing in school to help them create a sentence.
- Help them to create a good sentence (a short one for now)
- Ask them to repeat it lots of times so they remember it on their own
- Draw lines to represent each word

- You might want to point to each line saying each word of the sentence as you point, this will help them to see where they need to write the words.
- Ask your child to try to hear the sound at the beginning of each word (or more sounds/letters if they can do this on their own)
- Ask them to write the letter(s) on each line

See the example below: 'We are going to the park.'  
Draw a picture to go with it.

