

Reading and Writing Workshop Overview

Reading

It is really important that you continue to practice their letter strings. Some children will have started to learn some new phonemes (sounds) and the others will begin to learn some more soon. Do not worry if your child is in the latter group, they will still learn the same amount of phonemes as the other group, they are just taking it at a slightly slower pace to enable them more time to consolidate their knowledge.

Right now all children should confidently know the majority of the phonemes that they have been taught.

Please continue to speak to them in Fred Talk (time to go to b...e...d). Please continue to practise blending CVC words (consonant, vowel, consonant, e.g. cat, dog, pin, cup) and then practise CVCC and CCVC words (e.g. frog, clap)

When blending don't forget to encourage them to stretch the phonemes after they have said them, e.g. m...a...t.....mmmmaaaaaattttttt.....mat. Some beginning sounds won't stretch, e.g. c, t, p, b in these cases it will sound more like c...a...n.....caaaaaannnnn....can.

When reading words with digraphs (2 letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ng, nk) or trigraphs (3 letters making one sound, e.g. igh, air) encourage them to be a digraph/trigraph spotter before they start to read the word. You may suggest they check words that you know do not have digraphs/trigraphs in them also as then they get into the habit of checking words before they read them. Obviously do not do this for every word in a reading book.

Look for signs all around you to highlight that we read all day every day. There are supermarket signs, shop signs, road signs, posters, food packaging etc.

Red words are words that they just have to know and cannot be blended, e.g. the, said, I, he, she, we, they etc. We have stuck a starter set for them to learn in the back of their handwriting books. There are lots and lots of red words and they will come up frequently in their books. If they do not know the word you can just tell it to them. You can do the same with words that they are unable to blend yet, e.g. spaceman, everyone. If authors didn't use some of these words in the books then the stories would be rather dull!

Encourage children to re-read sentences as they go as they spend so long blending words that they often can't remember what they have just read and so do not understand it.

For example when reading,

The cat is on the mat.

You may get them to keep repeating the words before and then sound out the new word and then repeat again, e.g.

The cat

The cat is

The cat is on

The cat is on the

The cat is on the mat.

You may have to do this for them to start with and then as their confidence grows they will be able to do it for them selves, e.g. they sound out the words and you repeat them for them.

Remember that reading is not just about being able to blend words it's also about understanding what they have read. Therefore it is important to ask them questions about the text and pictures and encourage them to ask questions. It is a good opportunity for you to help develop their vocabulary and comprehension. Some of the reading books have questions in the covers to help give you some ideas.

It is also important that you keep reading story books to them that are above their reading level as this helps to develop their knowledge of narrative and their vocabulary.

Some examples of questions you could ask are –

- ▶ What do you think the story is about?
- ▶ I wonder why the character did that?
- ▶ What do you think will happen next?
- ▶ Where is the story happening?
- ▶ How do you think the character is feeling?

To develop children's fluency in reading they need to have seen words a lot of times, the more they see them the quicker they will remember them and this is why it is essential that you read with your child every day. This does not mean that you have to get them to read a whole book, it could just be a couple of pages a day depending on their ability and stamina.

To develop their expression help them to notice punctuation like exclamation marks and question marks and model how a character might say a phrase so that they can copy you.

Please remember that you are our best resource and are invaluable in your child's reading education. Those who are confident readers as adults and read for pleasure are generally more successful in their lives. You are all brilliant role models to your children and are vital in their reading journey!

Writing

From beginning school in September the Explorers have much to celebrate.

- Their pencil grip is well established correctly as 2 frogs on a log and held near the end of their chosen writing implement.
- They engage in daily fine motor activities and enjoy funky fingers on a Friday where they practice threading, using tweezers, letter formation and generally strengthening their fingers etc
- They have passed from mark making to using letters and words to communicate meaning.
- Their letter formation is becoming more correct and they are using the whoosh in and out

Stages of writing

Children will communicate through *letter strings* they use letters from their name as their name is very important.

We encourage them to use *initial sounds* to label objects eg:

a for apple

p r for pear

Once they are confident with hearing sounds in words we encourage them to write cvc words eg:

Cat, map, rat, hen, pig etc

Warning!

Please **do not** get children to copy write or write over dots. You are unintentionally telling them that they cannot write. They will see copy writing as just producing a pattern or a picture. It won't mean anything to them. If they join dots they won't establish the muscle memory they need to be able to form letters (graphemes).

We teach them punctuation in a physical way.

A full stop is a jab with clenched fist.

A capital letter is where you make a house shape touching fingers above your head.

We support the children with sentence writing by holding and writing a sentence.

We ask the children to make word fists and tell them the sentence we will write together eg I like hot chips.

My turn, your turn We punch the sentence into the air (saying one word for each punch) adding a full stop jab at the end.

Then the children repeat several times. Sometimes we thump it out using our hips or jump it out.

We count how many words we are going to write so 1:I 2: like 3: hot and 4:chips

We write the first word then say the next word and write it and so on until we have completed the sentence.

Once children are confident to write sentences we encourage them to think of their own sentences and record.

We wouldn't expect to see every word your child writes spelt correctly.

They record phonetically so apple would be apl, flower would be flwr and spider would be spidr. Once they are in Year One they will be taught more spelling patterns. The Explorers learn ay rather than ai so they would write rain as rayn.

There are lots of ways to help at home:

Write their names

Write the food shopping list with mum/ dad and then go and buy it

Write sounds they can hear

Write cards and thank you letters

Signs for around the house e.g. hands off! Keep out

Label toys using post it notes

Build dens and make signs

Write about their favourite story or character

Write about their family

Write post cards

They love post it notes and clipboards.