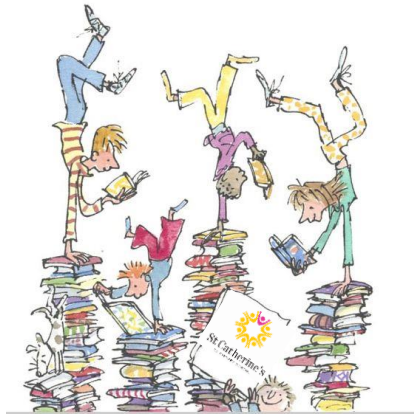


# What is Reading?

## A guide to reading without printed words



Becoming a competent reader needs a range of skills. Many of which don't even need a book!

This leaflet aims to help you in supporting your child in becoming a fluent and competent reader by exploring the underpinning skills and giving some ideas about fun ways that you can help your child to develop them.

### Not reading for reading



Vocabulary, the words that you know and understand, is crucial for good reading at every level. Getting out and about, experiencing different things, involving your child in things you are doing and talking, talking, talking is essential for their learning and development. There are lots of ways to develop your child's vocabulary and understanding:

- Talking to them all the time about what they are seeing and experiencing.
- Asking and answering questions about the world around them.
- Repeating back what they say, but adding more detail.



Bird nest

It is a bird's nest. It is very high up in that tall tree so the birds can be safe. I wonder if there are eggs in the nest. When might they hatch?





## Experiencing lots of different books and stories

The 'bedtime story' (which doesn't have to be at bedtime!) is such an important part of developing a child's reading skills and their love of reading. Any time that you can set aside to share stories will be invaluable for your child in so many ways.

Children will often choose the same stories over and over, and as they get more familiar they will enjoy joining in with the 'reading' by reciting parts of the story.

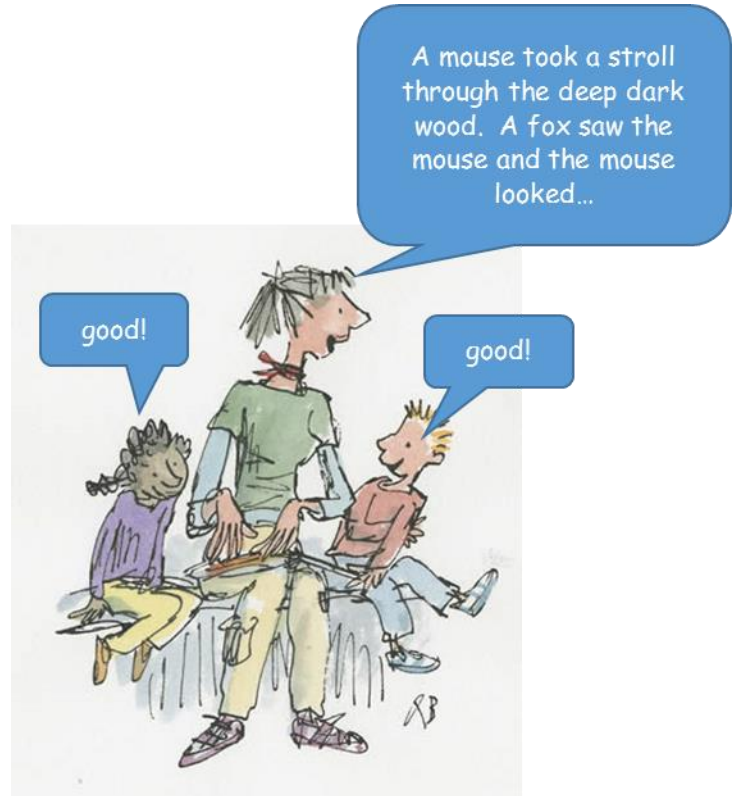
While you are reading, talk about the story, the pictures, the characters and how things in this story are similar to or different from your own life.

It is really helpful for your child to see you reading for pleasure and information as well

If you are not sure about which books to choose, speak to your child's teacher.

### Playing with words and sounds

Before children can learn phonics and read words, they need to be able to manipulate sounds and words orally. Examples of this are rhyming (A **fat cat** on a **mat**) alliteration (**S**imon the **silly snake**) and understanding syllables (the beats in words e.g. e-le-phant; kan-ga-roo).



### Activities for Rhyming

- Teach your child as many nursery rhymes as you can - they should be able to recite them by heart.
- Read rhyming stories (e.g. Julia Donaldson) and encourage your child to finish the sentences with the rhyming words.
- Play rhyming games such as Orchard Toys 'Slug in a Jug'.
- Have rhyming 'competitions' by taking it in turns to say a rhyming word - how long can you keep the string going? (Don't worry about how words are spelt, just how they sound. Words don't have to be real).

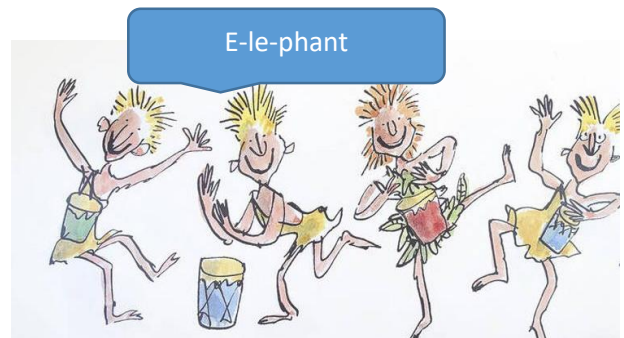


### Activities for Alliteration

- Learn some 'tongue twisters' such as **Peter Piper picked a pair of pickled peppers, where's the pair of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?**
- Play I spy - but remember to use the letter sound, not the letter name (something beginning with 's' rather than something beginning with 'es').
- Create alliteration strings, like the rhyming strings above.
- Choose a sound and spot as many things around the house or out and about that begin with that sound. (Don't worry about the actual starting letter - ceiling and seat are still alliterative)

### Activities for Syllables

Children don't need to learn the word syllable (although they can!), but they enjoy playing with the beats in words by clapping out the number of syllables. Start by clapping out the syllables in your child's name and other names in the family, so that they can hear, for example that John has 1 clap, Peter has 2 and Rebecca has 3. Then you can play with all sorts of words. Clap out new words that you come across in stories or things that you see when you are out and about. They can beat out syllables with instruments such as drums, shakers, bells etc. A sense of rhythm is important for reading and spelling.



### Talking About Pictures

Using picture books is a great way to start children on their journey to independent reading. Without the distraction of print, you and your child can really get some valuable reading skills from the book:

- talk about what is happening in the picture,
- find things in the picture beginning with certain sounds,
- predict what might happen next,
- discuss the characters' feelings.

There is an example on page 4 of how you can use picture books to start your child's reading journey.

### Moving on to decoding words, letters and sounds

When children are confident with books and have mastered the early skills, they will begin learning how to decode print. Phonics teaching refers to the way that children learn that letters represent certain sounds.

Children will learn 'Jolly Phonics', a scheme that uses rhymes and pictures to teach the letter sounds. We will send more information about our phonics scheme as we progress through it.



## Reading Books Without Words

Your child will begin with reading books without words. The example below shows how you can develop your child's reading skills before tackling printed words.

These are the first steps to use with all early reading books, whether or not they have words:

**'Walk through'** the book: this is when you talk about what is happening on each page and begin to get a 'feel' for the story. There is an example below.

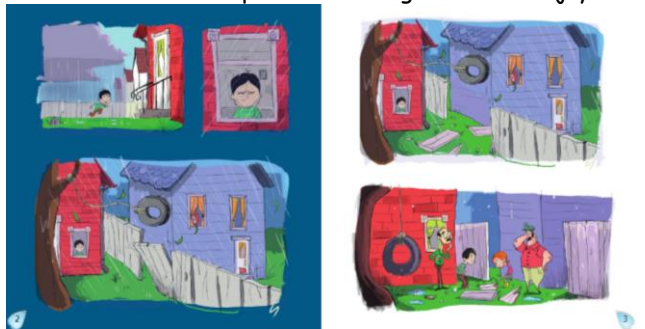
**'Talk through'** the book: Active learn books have a 'read to me' option which is particularly useful for the books without words. If you are using a 'real' picture book, talk through it with your child, telling the story together.

**Play with the pictures:** Go back through the book and look for things in the pictures that begin with..... or that rhyme with...., etc. Describe something from the picture and see if your child can guess what you are describing. Ask them to do the describing and see if you can guess.



Look at the front and back pages of the book for ideas about how it can be used to develop wider reading skills and enjoyment of reading.

Read the title page and talk about what the story might be about.



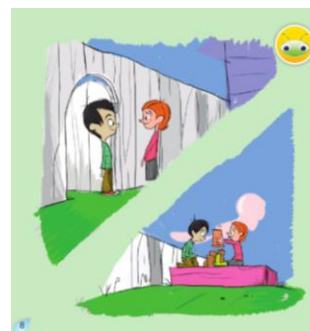
Who can we see in the pictures? What are the characters' names? What sounds do their names begin with? Clap out the syllables. What is happening in each picture? Look closely at the picture for the details (e.g. the girl in the upstairs window) What are the characters thinking and feeling? Talk about the rain and the wind. What made the fence fall down?



What do the adults think about the fence being broken? What do the children think about it? What are the adults going to do? What are the children going to do? Talk about what the hammer and nails are for - have you used these before? What sound does the hammer make?



What has happened now? How do the children feel about this? What is Tim saying to his Dad? Talk about what the speech bubble and thinking bubble mean - children will see these in 'words' books. What does Dad use to make the hole?



How did Dad solve the problem? How do the children feel? What might they say? Was this a good idea?

Remember that you can read a book a number of times and do different things with it each time. When your child knows the story well, encourage them to retell it in their own words, helping them to use full sentences and adding more detail each time.