

# Looking

## for ways to support literacy at home?



Scan the QR codes to view our SPS Family Literacy Resources.

1

## Linking Sounds to Letters



**LINKING SOUNDS TO LETTERS** SUPPORTING FAMILIES & GROWING READERS

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Helping children recognize sounds in spoken words and link those sounds to letters will prepare them to read and understand words. Being aware of sounds in words is very important to reading. This awareness allows children to break apart words orally and use sounds to learn to read and write words.

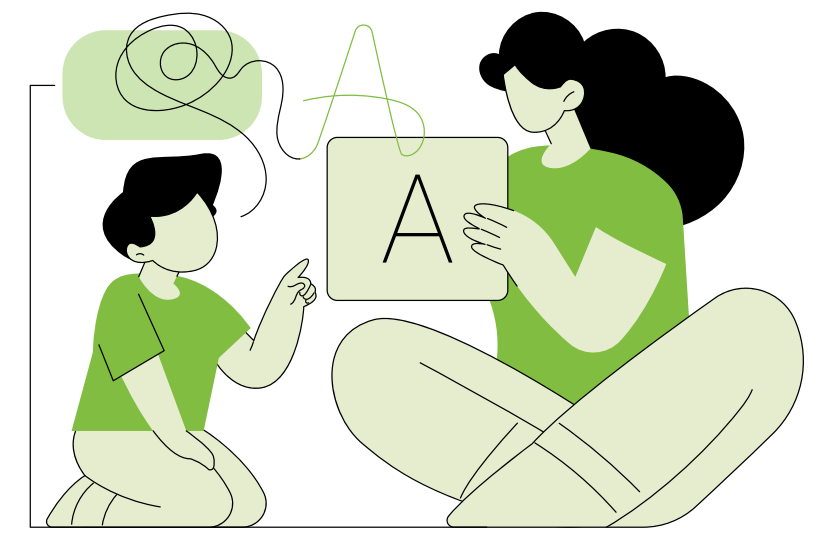
**1 HEAR AND USE THE SOUNDS IN WORDS**

Introduce children to words, which are larger, familiar speech segments, working down to smaller and smaller sound segments, first whole words, then parts of words, and finally individual sounds. This will prepare them to learn about the individual sounds that letters represent, and then recognize those sounds and letters as they are used in words.

Show children that they can break down sentences into words. For example, ask them to count the number of words in the sentence: "The puppy can jump." Show them two slices of a word.

to help them think a word. For put or

Play a variation of Eye Spy, called "I Hear". Say to your child, "I hear with my little ear, something that starts with the sound..." This will help them strengthen how they hear individual sounds in words.



Helping your child to recognize letters and learn letter sounds

2

## Strategies for Beginning Readers

**STRATEGIES FOR BEGINNING READERS** SUPPORTING FAMILIES & GROWING READERS

Did you know that children who know just a few letters and sounds can begin to practice putting them together to make words? This is true for all students, including our language learners.

For example, if a child can recognize A and M and knows their sounds, they can begin looking at them together (into the words *am, me, mama*). The more letters and sounds they know, the more words they can create and decode (sound out).

We can teach children specific skills in the beginning stages of reading which young readers can also use when they get stuck on "tricky" words. Please note: skills learned in the home language can support the development of a new language.

**BLENDED SOUNDS**

Blending is the ability to put sounds together to read a word.

1. Ask children to look at the word from left to right. Read from left to right. Start on the left side of the word.
2. Ask children to say the sound of each letter or letter combination one by one until the end of the word. Look at the Letters, Say the Sounds. Look at all the letters in the word. Say the sounds that the letters make.
3. After saying the sound of each letter, they then slide through each sound more quickly, blending the sounds. This technique helps them remember and combine sounds to arrive at the correct word.

Parent: What? Child: What? Parent: And? Child: What? Parent: What? Child: What?



Supporting your child as they learn to decode words

3

## Making Sense of Sight Words

Building knowledge of words that do not follow expected spelling patterns

**MAKING SENSE OF SIGHT WORDS** SUPPORTING FAMILIES & GROWING READERS

Have you ever heard the term "sight word"? This phrase is commonly used to describe words that appear frequently in text. But what are sight words and how can we help children recognize words by "sight"?

There are several types of words that children will come across when beginning to read.

**regular**

- A regular word follows common, expected letter and sound "rules", meaning the sounds in the word are spelled predictably.
- Regular words can be read using letter and sound combinations that a child is familiar with, and can also be called "decodable".

**irregular**

- An irregular word does not follow common, expected letter and sound "rules".
- Irregularly spelled words are often called "heart words" because some part of the word is "learned by heart".
- The good news is that most common irregular words have only one or two letters which don't follow the expected spelling rules.

words that appear very frequently in text are called **HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS** and can be regular (had, get) or irregular (said, one)

any word stored in a reader's memory can be called a **SIGHT WORD** and can be regular or irregular

**FOR EXAMPLE**

The word *said* has three sounds, /s/ /a/ /d/.  
The first sound, /s/, is spelled with an s.  
The second sound, /a/, is spelled with ai, but it's like we would expect. That is the part we must know by heart.  
The last sound, /d/, is spelled with d.

Note: Letters written between two backslashes should be read as a sound, rather than the letter name. Letters which are read in the letter name, and a "heart gear" or sound with irregular spelling is shown with a heart.



4

## Building a Love of Reading

**BUILDING A LOVE OF READING** SUPPORTING FAMILIES & GROWING READERS

Learning to read is hard work, but reading doesn't have to feel like a chore. Finding joy in reading deepens our understanding, helps us practice reading skills, and exercises our imagination. Read on to see how you can help foster the love of reading with your child.

**1 READ ABOUT TOPICS WHICH INTEREST YOUR CHILD**

Do you have a dinosaur-lover or horse? Macmillan's Art! Build a love of reading for your child by reading books on the topics they are passionate about. Exposing them to new vocabulary will support their understanding as they grow as readers.

**Borrowing Books of Big Interest**

Every school has a library with specially chosen literature for children. Most classes visit the school library every 1-2 weeks.

Our public libraries are also a wonderful source for books and media on all topics (in many languages), and even offer themed collections, called "Bookworm Bags".

Signing up for a library card is free and your child can have their very own!

**2 SUPPORT THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF IMPORTANT WORDS**

Books on particular topics are likely to contain words that are challenging to read important to the topic (ex. evaporate). The word might be challenging when haven't learned a sound-spelling pattern in the word, or if the word has irregular spelling. You can use to discuss challenging, important words:

- 1. Skim the book to find three challenging, important words that appear in it.
- 2. Point to the word in the book and read it to your child.
- 3. Have your child look at the word and repeat it.
- 4. Explain what the word means and why it is important for this book.
- 5. As you read the book, stop at the challenging, important word.
- 6. Point to the word again and ask your child to read it and explain what it means.

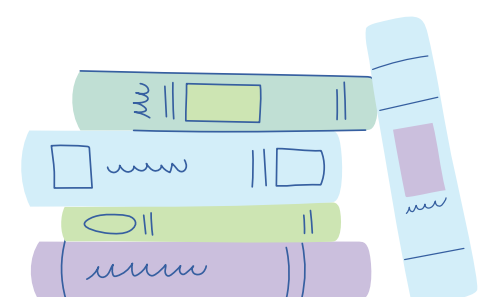


Fostering a love of reading with your child

5

## The Leap from Letters to Words

Developing a child's ability to connect letters and sounds with whole-word reading



**THE LEAP FROM LETTERS TO WORDS** SUPPORTING FAMILIES & GROWING READERS

The transition from learning letters to reading and writing words can be a big leap for children. This resource discusses what children need to know and be able to do, and provides activities that caregivers can use to help with this transition.

**Letter Name and Sound Knowledge**

Research shows that alphabet knowledge is one of the six skills most predictive of later reading ability (NEF, 2008; NRP, 2000). Children who recognize letters and know the sounds that letters represent can use that knowledge when learning to read and spell.

**HELPING LETTERS STICK**

To recognize words, our brains need to reorganize and create new pathways. This process takes lots of practice connecting what we see and hear. For example, students need to be able to hear the individual sounds in the word *sat*, /s/ /a/ /t/ and know that s represents /s/, a represents /a/, and t represents /t/.

Where traditionally we might use flashcards and practice letters individually with children, the most powerful way to make letters and their sounds sticky, is to practice them as part of words. This can be done as soon as your child knows a few letters and sounds.

Children work with letters as part of words, it activates and connects important /t/ the brain used to read and spell. These connections make it easier to recall the sound, and even the word!

**3D PRACTICE ACTIVITIES**

1. Hear individual sounds in words.
2. Connect sounds to letters.
3. Blend sounds to read whole words.

Activities include a chance to write (print) the letters within words to create a stronger connection to memory.

**TALKING WHILE YOU READ**

building knowledge and vocabulary with clever questions

**THE PROCESS**

1. PROMPT ask your child a question about the text
2. EVALUATE is the response correct?
3. EXPAND add to their response with appropriate vocabulary
4. REPEAT repeat the expanded response

**TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK**

- 1. COMPLETION ask your child to complete a word or phrase
- 2. THE BOY'S FAVOURITE COLOUR IS ask your child about past events in the text
- 3. OPEN-ENDED ask a question which can't be answered with "yes" or "no"
- 4. WH-QUESTION ask questions beginning with who, what, where, when, or how
- 5. DISTANCE ask questions that tie back to your child's own experience



## Reading Strategy Bookmark