



A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Read

Across the Learn to Live Federation we use a systematic synthetic approach to teaching phonics. This is a proven and successful method of learning how to read.

The way in which we sound the letters are important. It is important for us as role models to demonstrate the correct sound. We need to ensure we keep the sound short without adding 'uh' to the end of the sound.

Segmenting is breaking a whole word into sounds. This is what we do when reading unfamiliar words.

Blending is the opposite of segmenting where we stitch the sounds together to make a word. This is what we do when we say the word in full.

Some words cannot be read by segmenting and then blending (breaking the word down into sounds) and they need to be learnt as the full word. These words are called *tricky* words or *common exception* words.

Top tips:

- **Reading is hard work for all beginner readers, even harder if you have processing, attention, speech and language or visual difficulties.**
- **Choose a quiet, calm time of day**
- **Be patient, kind and positive.**
- **Short bursts, keep it enjoyable.**
- **Encourage your child to identify and then blend the sounds**
- **Read each sentence or encourage them to read the sentence again after they have decoded it to encourage comprehension, fluency and confidence.**
- **Give them time to work things out.**
- **Explain what words mean if they are not sure.**
- **Reduce visual distractions by covering other words or parts of the word if required**
- **Repetition, repetition, repetition. Reading the same book lots of times give opportunities for your child to build their comprehension, fluency and confidence.**

What to do if your child becomes stuck:

- **If they make a mistake give them the opportunity to self-correct e.g. Was there another sound in that word? Just check that word again.**
- **It's okay to use the pictures**
- **Remind them if they have seen the word before in the book**
- **If you child doesn't know the sound then tell them and then encourage them to still blend the word**
- **Tell them if it is a tricky word so they don't attempt to use phonics and then fail**

- If your child has processing difficulties you could encourage them to blend as they go e.g. catch = c, ca, cat, cat ch, catch – so they are only processing two sounds at any time.



Games and activities:

- **Bingo** – match the same words, words that rhyme, begin with the same sound etc.
- **Match a picture to the correct word**
- **Memory game** – turn over the word cards to find matching pairs
- **Cut up a sentence and re order the words**
- **Silly sentences** – use word cards to make up own sentence and read it back
- **Play I spy using the pictures, or I spy a word beginning with...**
- **Fishing game** – catch a word ‘fish’. If you can read it, keep it. Who can catch the most ‘fish’?
- **Build a word** - Use a marker pen to write letters on building blocks. Can you make a word with the bricks?

Don't forget reading for pleasure – give them a reason to want to read:

It is important to share a range of texts with your child with the only purpose being enjoyment. For example, when sharing a bed time story. During these times, it is not important to be encouraging your child to segment or blend or to help you read as this can be a tiring process. Children need to be exposed to the joy of stories and that reading can bring. This can then inspire them to want to learn how to read.

You can share a variety of written texts with your child. It could be a books, recipes, magazines, television guides, catalogues and websites etc.

You could also go to your local library and visit bookshops and show your child that you also read for pleasure.