

## Jolly Phonics in the Foundation Phase.

Jolly Phonics is a Phonics programme for children that builds a thorough foundation for reading and writing. It's method of teaching the letter sounds are in a fun way. Children learn how to use the letter sounds to read and write words. Jolly Phonics also includes the learning of the irregular or 'tricky words' such as said, was and the.

Parental support is important to all children as they benefit from plenty of praise and encouragement whilst learning. You should be guided by the pace at which your child wants to go. If interest is being lost, leave the teaching for a while and then come back to it later. Not all children find it easy to learn and blend sounds. Extra practice will lead to fluency in reading and help your child manage at school.

**The five basic skills for reading and writing are:**

1. Learning the letter sounds
2. Learning letter formation
3. Blending
4. Identifying sounds in words
5. Spelling the tricky words

Although the skills are covered separately they will be taught together.

### **1. Learning the letter sounds**

In Jolly Phonics the 42 main sounds of English are taught, not just the alphabet. The sounds are in seven groups. Some sounds are written with two letters, such as ee and or. These are called digraphs.

1- s, a, t, i, p, n

2- c k, e, h, r, m, d

3 - g, o, u, l, f, b

4- ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or

5- z, w, ng, v, oo, oo

6 - y, x, ch, sh, th, th

7- qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar

Each sound has an action which helps children remember the letter(s) that represent it. As a child progresses you can point to the letters and see how quickly that can do the action and say the sound. One letter sound can be taught each day. As a child becomes more confident, the actions are no longer necessary. There is a list

of all of the letter sounds and their corresponding actions available from Mrs. C Davies.

Children should learn each letter by its sound, not its name. For example, the letter a should be called a (as in ant) not ai (as in aim). Similarly, the letter n should be nn (as in net), not en. This will help with blending. The names of each letter can follow later. The letters have not been introduced in alphabetical order. The first group (s, a, t, i, p, n) has been chosen because they make more simple three-letter words than any other six letters. The letters b and d are introduced in different groups to avoid confusion. Sounds that have more than one way of being written are initially taught in one form only. For example, the sound ai (rain) is taught first, and then alternatives a-e (gate) and ay (day) follow later.

## **2. Learning letter formation**

It is very important that a child holds their pencil in the correct way. The pencil should be held in the 'tripod' grip between the thumb and first two fingers. If a child's hold starts incorrectly, it is very difficult to correct later on. A child needs to form each letter the correct way. The letter c is introduced in the early stages as this forms the basic shape of some other letters, such as d. Particular problems to look for are:

- the o (the pencil stroke must be anticlockwise, not clockwise),
- d (the pencil starts in the middle, not the top),
- there must be an initial downstroke on letters such as m and n.

A good guide is to remember that no letter starts on the baseline. The grip is the same for both left- and right-handed children.

## **3. Blending**

Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word. For example, sounding out d-o-g and making dog. It is a technique every child will need to learn, and it improves with practice. To start with you should sound out the word to see if your child can hear it. Some children take longer than others to hear this. The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder. Try little and often with words like b-u-s, t-o-p, c-a-t and h-e-n.

Remember that some sounds (digraphs) are represented by two letters, such as sh. Children should sound out the digraph (sh), not the individual letters (s-h). With practice they will be able to blend the digraph as one sound in a word. So, a word like rain should be sounded out r-ai-n, and feet as f-ee-t. This is difficult to begin with and takes practice.

You will find it helpful to be able to distinguish between a blend (such as st) and a digraph (such as sh). In a blend the two sounds, s and t can each be heard. In a digraph this is not so. Some words in English have an irregular spelling and cannot be read by blending, such as said, was and one. Unfortunately, many of these are common words. The irregular parts have to be remembered. These are called the 'tricky words'.

#### **4. Identifying sounds in words.**

The easiest way to know how to spell a word is to listen for the sounds in that word. Even with the tricky words an understanding of the letter sounds can help. Start by having your child listen for the first sound in a word. Games like I-Spy are ideal for this. Next try listening for the end sounds, as the middle sound of a word is the hardest to hear.

Begin with simple three-letter words such as cat or hot. A good idea is to say a word and tap out the sounds. Three taps means three sounds. Say each sound as you tap. Take care with digraphs. The word fish, for example, has four letters but only three sounds, f-i-sh. Rhyming games, poems and the Jolly Songs also help tune the ears to the sounds in words. Other games to play are:

a) Add a sound: what do I get if I add a p to the beginning of ink?

Answer: pink. .

b) Take away a sound: what do I get if I take away p from pink? Answer: ink.

#### **5. Spelling the Tricky Words**

1) Look, Cover, Write and Check. Look at the word to see which bit is tricky. Ask the child to try writing the word in the air saying the letters. Cover the word over and see if the child can write it correctly. Check to make sure.

There are different ways of learning tricky spellings:

2) Mnemonics. The initial letter of each word in a saying gives the correct spelling of a word. For example, laugh - Laugh At Ugly Goat's Hair.

If you require any support or guidance with supporting your child with Phonics, please do not hesitate to come and see Mrs. C Davies our Nursery and Reception Teacher.

