



Dear Parents,

In our Literacy sessions, the children have been developing skills in phonological awareness. Research has shown that phonological awareness is the most powerful predictor of success in learning to read and spell which is why we have made it an integral part of our 'Ready Set Go' Reading Program. Children have been:

- learning to listen for and isolate the first sound they can hear in a word,
- learning to detect rhyme in words,
- exploring the concept of what a word is and how many syllables it has,
- learning that the letter symbols a / m / s / f / p and t / all have a name and a sound and are written from a specific starting point, following a specific direction.
- Some children have started blending and segmenting sounds within words and others will begin doing this too, very soon.

There are a few things you, as parents, could do to consolidate what your child has learnt so far. Informally and incidentally, a little bit...5 minutes... each day, whilst on a car trip or a walk to the park, you can prompt your child to think about the sounds and letters in words. The following is a list of ideas as to how you could follow up on our first term's study in literacy:

- look for letters a/ m/ s/ f/ t / in signs, in books, on cereal packets etc and when your child spots those letters, ask..."What's the name of that letter? What sound does it make?"
- practice writing an "m" or an "s" in the sand at the beach or in the mud in a driveway or in the soap suds on the side of the bathtub! Make the letter symbols out of pebbles or nuts or little Easter eggs! These letters start at a specific place which at school we mark with a star. Ask "Where do we start this letter? [We always start at the top!]"
- during a car trip or a walk somewhere, think of words with a particular theme and ask, "What sound can you hear at the start of...? What other words start with ...?"
- in bed with the kids on a Sunday morning, try a game of 'I Spy'. It goes like this..."I spy with my little eye, something beginning with the sound 's'..." Be sure to use the sound of the letter not the name.
- Read some Dr Seuss or any of the many books that have rhyme and ask "Can you hear words that rhyme? What parts in log and fog sound the same? Can you think of another word to rhyme with hog?"
- Clap the beats in words...e.g "We're going to [clap, clap] nan/na's house tomorrow." or "Did you know that [clap, clap clap] veg/i/mite is my favourite?" Clap the beats /syllables **as** you say the word.

Soon we will be sending home some pre-reading books and activity packs with your child. These "take home" books are for you to read with your child. There are 3 ways to read a book and we encourage you to use these when looking at these books with your child.

Read the pictures: Look through the book first and discuss the pictures.

Read the words: You should read to your child with them pointing to the words with their finger.

Retell the story: Discuss what you have read together.

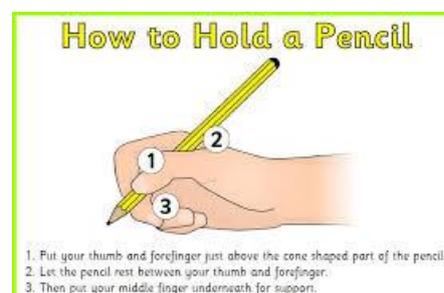
We have been working on the **Daily 5** and all of the students should be able to show you how to read to self, read to others and listen to others reading. Ask them the rules!

There will be 2 different types of books sent home across this term. Some books will require parents to read to their children and read the book in 3 ways. Others will allow the students to use their sound knowledge and blending skills to 'read' the books themselves.

As well as a "take-home" book, each child will be given a letter strip on which the letters that we have studied at school are represented. A picture will support your child's memory of each letter. Please ask your child to say the name and sound of each letter on the strip until he/she can say the letters quickly and automatically. The letters strips will be sent home after the letters have been studied at school so the set will accumulate over time.

This year we are teaching children to read sight words through phonics. We have organised the sight words into those that are easiest to sound out through to those that are more difficult but can be grouped together with others because they have a common pattern. We have named these sight words "heart words" due to the fact that these are the words we use often and need to learn by heart! These words will be sent home to practise when it is appropriate to do so.

When your children are writing or drawing it would help us greatly if you were to check the way they are holding their pencil, crayon, texta etc. Children have been shown the "tripod" grip and the more they use this grip, the more natural it will feel. The tripod grip is essential for writing dexterity and all children will be required to use it this year. Three sided pencils will aid this development. The Royal Children's Hospital have a good guide for developing the correct pencil grip.



http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ot/InfoSheet_A.pdf

Don't forget to talk to your child about what they are going to present when it is their "Show and Tell" time. Discuss with them the What? When? Why? Who? Where? How? Type questions so they are prepared. Get them to practice looking at their audience, using a good volume voice and speaking at a good pace.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have worked with us in the Foundation Learning Centre in Term 1. Your help is greatly appreciated. If anyone else would like to help out in the morning "Ready. Set. Go" Literacy sessions or any other time, please let us know.

Should you have any questions about the above do not hesitate to speak to any of us.

Regards,

KAREN HALKET, JESS DOOLAN, EMMA SLOCOMBE & KENDRA ANDERSON

Foundation Learning Team

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