

DEVELOPING PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Your child doesn't have to know the alphabet to start learning the skills he/she needs for reading and writing! The following activities are focused on the *sounds that we hear* in words, not the letters we write.

SYLLABLES

- ☉ Break up longer words into syllables (or beats), and clap once for each syllable (eg. el-e-phant, cat-er-pill-ar, ta-ble, Me-liss-a)
- ☉ Jump or stomp out the beats, or say the words while playing hopscotch
- ☉ Talk about 'long words' and 'short words'



RHYME

- ☉ Read books that use rhyming words; emphasizing and talking about the words that rhyme
- ☉ Sing nursery rhymes and songs with rhyming words
- ☉ Teach your child simple poems and routines
- ☉ Encourage your child to make up more words to rhyme with the words in books and songs, and to make up nonsense words that rhyme



INITIAL SOUNDS

- ☉ Emphasise the first sounds in words when reading
- ☉ Pause during reading and encourage your child to guess what the next word might be from the first sound (eg. The dog chased the /sss/.....)
- ☉ Play games like 'I spy', using the sound the word begins with rather than the letter -ie. 'knife' starts with /n/



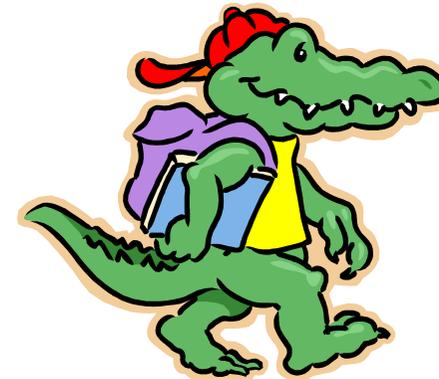
BLENDING & SEGMENTING SOUNDS

- ☉ Say words broken up into separate sounds, with a small pause between each sound. Say the sounds, rather than the letter names (eg. t-o-p, not 'tee, oh, pee'). Have your child try to guess the word you are saying.
- ☉ You could make this into a game, or use it when giving instructions (eg. go and get your b-a-g)

Above all, encourage your child to experiment with sounds and words, and have fun! Don't put pressure on your child if he/she has difficulties with these skills - just continue to expose them to lots of reading, rhymes, and talking!

Talking: on the way to school

Information about
speech and language
for parents of
children entering Prep



LANGUAGE IN THE LAUNDRY



The information in this booklet has been collated from various sources and is provided as a guide only.

Please remember that each child is an individual who will develop different skills at different ages.

If you have any concerns about your child's speech and language development please discuss these with your child's teacher. He/she will then consider a referral to the visiting Speech Language Pathologist.

- ☉ Washing is a chore at home that we can't ignore. But with a little extra energy a daily job can become a language learning environment for your child.

IN THE LAUNDRY TALK ABOUT...

- ☉ **SORTING:** Ask your child to help you sort the washing before you put it in the machine. *'Put all of Daddy's work clothes together'* *'Put all of the socks and underwear together'* *'Put all of the towels and sheets together'*



- ☉ **COUNTING:** Count the number of socks / shirts / towels as you hang them on the line.
- ☉ **DESCRIPTIONS:** Talk about whose clothes they are and what they look like. E.g., *'These are Daddy's long black pants'* *'This is my new red stripy dress'* *'The little blue shirts are my uniform'*
- ☉ **COMPARISONS:** Talk about how clothes are different. Compare them e.g., *'A jumper has long sleeves, a shirt has short sleeves, a singlet doesn't have any sleeves'*, *'Mummy's dresses are big and my dresses are small'*

- ☉ **MEASUREMENT:** Ask your child to help you measure the amount of washing powder you need. Discuss concepts such as 'half' 'full'. *'Today the machine has lots of things in it. We will need a full cup of detergent. Fill it all the way to the top. A full cup.'*



- ☉ **FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS:** Involve your child in hanging out the clothes. Give them directions of increasing complexity eg. *'Give mummy the socks'*, *'Pass me the red socks'*, *'Pass me the yellow towel and three pegs'*
- ☉ Encourage fine motor development by letting your child use the pegs to hang the washing out. Pinching the pegs together is good for developing finger skills.
- ☉ **DECISIONS:** talk with your child about the concepts of 'wet' and 'dry'. Let them feel the washing when it is wet as you hang it out. Explain that it is time to take it off when it feels dry. Ask your child to feel the washing and decide if it is ready to be taken off.
- ☉ **SORTING:** together sort the dry clothes into those that do and do not need ironing. Then sort the piles to be put away. *'Put all of Mummy's clothes together'*, *'Put all of Daddy's clothes in a pile beside Mummy's'*

Remember by making these activities fun and involving your child, not only will you be teaching them but it will also give a helping hand.

LANGUAGE IN THE BATHROOM



- ☉ Daily activities in the bathroom are a great time to practice language activities with your child. You can use this time to teach your child words and concepts on a regular basis.

IN THE BATHROOM, TALK ABOUT...

- ☉ **PLAY:** Allow your child time to play during bath time. Encourage them to talk during this play time and tell you what they are doing. Help your child to expand his/her language by providing good language models and extending their utterances by a word or two. "Duck swim" "Yes the duck is swimming. Duck is swimming in the bath."
- ☉ **USE:** Use household objects to play in the bath. Talk about what the object is normally used for, where the child might find it in the house, and what they can do with it in the bath. Use things such as colanders, funnels, empty margarine containers / yoghurt tubs, empty detergent bottles, sponges etc.
- ☉ **BODY PARTS:** Bath time is a great time to learn the names of our body parts. Start off with the well known parts e.g., head, face, arms, legs etc. Then label things like knees, elbows, ankles, knuckles etc. Ask your child to wash the different parts of their body and dry them when they are finished.
- ☉ **CONCEPTS:** Talk about opposite concepts that are demonstrated when we have a bath.
 - 'Dry-Wet' - talk about how before we get in the bath we are dry. Then when you get in the water you are wet. How do you feel after you use your towel?
 - 'Hot-Cold' - talk about the different taps in the bathroom. The cold tap typically has a blue dot and the hot tap has a red. Explain why you shouldn't touch the hot tap. Show the child that you have to use both hot and cold water to make the bath just right.
 - 'Float-Sink' - use household objects or toys, put them in the bath and see what they do. Talk about how heavy objects sink and light objects float.
 - Other concepts may include: 'Dirty-Clean', 'Full-Empty'



SEQUENCING: Talk about the steps you take in routines that occur in the bathroom e.g., brushing your teeth. See if your child can tell you what they do in each step as they do it: '*I squeeze the toothpaste onto my brush...*' Alternatively talk your child through the sequence as they complete the task.

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- in the bathroom
- in the laundry

Talking: How important is it?

Communication is essential for learning, literacy and numeracy development, interacting with others, participation in all class and school activities, and positive self esteem.

Quick definitions:

Speech: the movement of lips, tongue, jaw and breath to produce sounds

Language: the ability to understand and convey information

- **Receptive Language:** following directions, understanding questions, understanding words and their meanings, understanding stories
- **Expressive Language:** giving directions, asking questions, using correct vocabulary, putting words together to make sentences, using correct grammar, telling stories

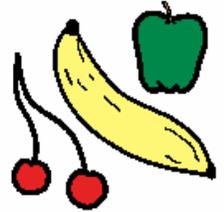
Phonological awareness: awareness of sounds in words, including: syllable segmentation (el-e-phant), rhyme recognition and production, blending (c-a-t → cat), segmenting (dog → d-o-g), and identifying sounds (1st sound in fish is /fff/).

Research tells us...

When children hear high quality adult speech and when they have the fullest, freest opportunities to talk, they are being taught to read. (Kalmer, 2008)



- ☉ **CATEGORISE:** Talk about the food in your kitchen; help your child to think about the 'groups' that different foods belong to, e.g., 'Find all of the fruits' 'Tell me some hot things you like to eat' 'Put all the sweet things in the fridge'



- ☉ **FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS:** Give your child instructions that vary in length and complexity. E.g., 'Get spoon' → 'Get the spoon out of the drawer' → 'Get the big spoon out of the drawer and give it to Daddy' → 'Get the big spoon and the blue cup out of the drawer and give it to Daddy' → 'Before you go upstairs for a shower, get the big spoon and the blue cup out of the drawer and give it to Daddy'



- ☉ **CHANGES:** Talk about the changes we see in food when we cook it. E.g., 'The spaghetti was hard before we cooked it. Then we put it into the hot water and it went soft' 'The egg was runny before we cooked it, now it's hard' 'The cake got bigger when we cooked it in the oven'

- ☉ **DIFFERENCES:** Talk about similarities and differences between objects in the kitchen e.g., 'knife-fork. You use them to eat with. They both have handles. A knife is sharp and long and used to cut things. A fork has prongs to poke food and pick it up'



LANGUAGE IN THE KITCHEN

- ☉ Food time can be fun time. So take time out to cook and have fun with your child. From an early age children can participate in and enjoy cooking activities. As your child gets older you can give him/her more responsibilities.



IN THE KITCHEN TALK ABOUT...

- ☉ **ACTIONS:** Get into the habit of saying out loud what you or your child are doing in the kitchen e.g., 'I'm cutting the vegetables for the soup', 'I'm grating the cheese for the pizza', 'I'm washing the dishes to make them clean' etc
- ☉ **FUNCTIONS:** Talk about what things are used for in the kitchen e.g., knife for cutting, spoon for stirring, bowl for mixing etc

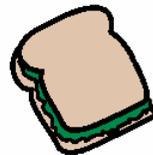


- ☉ **DESCRIPTIONS:** Talk about things in the kitchen and what they look, smell, taste, feel and sound like. Use words like: big, little, long, round, bumpy, spiky, soft, hard, sweet, sour, hot, cold, sticky, salty, etc.

- ☉ **WHERE:** Talk about where things are in the kitchen. Try to use some of your 'position' words: 'The cake is in the oven' 'The cup is on the table' 'The cloth is under the sink' 'The plate goes between the knife and fork' etc.

- ☉ **SEQUENCE:** Talk about the steps you take in cooking activities. For example; when making a sandwich:

*'First we get the bread and the toppings out.
Then we put the butter on.
Next we choose what we want on the sandwich.
Then we spread the jam/vegemite on.
Then we cut the sandwich in half.
Then we eat it.'*



Your child can also anticipate what comes next in an activity e.g., 'what do we need to do now the ingredients are in the bowl?' 'What will I need to stir it?'

Proficiency in phonological awareness abilities is closely related to later success in reading and spelling. (Leask & Hinchcliffe, 2007)

ABC



Language skills are also important for establishing friendships and social well-being.

Language production at age 3 predicts reading comprehension scores as measured at age 9 to 10. When parents offer positive and encouraging experiences, children's vocabularies expand. (Hart & Risley 2003)

Close links have been found between children's oral narrative abilities (e.g., ability to tell a well-structured story) and reading comprehension skills. (Westerveld, Gillon & Moran, 2008)

Developing Language Skills

- ☉ CREATE opportunities for your child to hear language being used correctly. e.g., 'He kicked the ball. He kicked the ball very high.'



- ☉ CREATE opportunities for your child to use and practice language. e.g., 'She's wearing a hat. What else is she wearing?'

- ☉ PROVIDE a wide range of experiences. e.g., outings to parks, making cake
- ☉ DISCOURAGE older brothers and sisters from talking for your child
- ☉ SIMPLIFY your language when your child doesn't understand. e.g., use short sentences, rephrase what you have said. Match your sentence length, structure and vocabulary to your child's level of understanding.
 - P: 'Go to your room and get your brush so I can do your hair and your bag for Prep and put your shoes and socks on'
 - C: 'What?'
 - P: 'You need your brush so I can do your hair. Go and get your brush.'
 - C: 'Here it is.'
 - P: 'Good. Now you need your bag, shoes and socks. Three things to remember: your bag, shoes and socks. Do you remember what you need?'
- ☉ MODEL and EMPHASISE words e.g., 'a red cup. What a big, red cup.'
- ☉ EXPAND the language used by your child. e.g., 'That dog mine.' → 'Yes, that little dog is yours.'



- ☉ USE self talk. e.g., 'I think I'll need a bigger saucepan.'
- ☉ GIVE positive feedback. e.g., 'Good try, you almost got it.'
- ☉ READ and TALK about interesting books.



- ☉ SAY nursery rhymes and sing together.

LABEL things, feeling and actions. TALK about the function of objects, and the similarities and differences between objects.

Reading to your Child



- ☉ Show delight and enthusiasm as you read. Reading should never be a chore.
- ☉ Try to read to your child everyday. Sit together for as long as your child is interested.
- ☉ Reading should be done at a time that is convenient for both you and your child. Make sure it is quiet and there are no interruptions.
- ☉ Guide your child's choice of books by giving them three or four options.
- ☉ Try to choose books that tie in with the classroom theme or are about a topic that interests your child.
- ☉ Pictures should be clear with not too many objects on a page.
- ☉ Books should be supported by pictures so that the story makes sense even when the words are not read.
- ☉ Include books that teach new speech sounds, concepts (such as farm animals, things we wear, parts of the body), or morals (how to share, make friends etc).
- ☉ Books should help add new words to the child's vocabulary. Alphabet books, picture dictionaries, and catalogues emphasize development of new words.
- ☉ Let your child help hold the book and turn the pages.
- ☉ Encourage your child to describe the pictures and tell the story to you.
- ☉ If you have read the same story a number of times, try leaving out some words or parts of sentences and have your child fill them in.
- ☉ Write down your child's own stories and read them back to him/her. Ask your child to draw a picture for the story to make a special book.
- ☉ If at times your child does not show an interest in reading, continue to read to the child as he/she plays quietly. Eventually the child will again be eager to participate in reading.



- ☉ When you have finished reading the story, ask your child some questions to see how much they remembered: 'Who was in the story?' 'What did they do?' 'Where did the story happen?' etc.



Speech & Language Development of the SIX year old



SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

- By the end of the child's sixth year they should be confidently using the following sounds: p, b, m, w, h, t, d, n, k, g, ng, y, f, sh, l, ch, j, s, z, zh, 2 sound 'blends'
- Your six year old may still be experience difficulties producing: v, r, th, and 3 sound 'blends' (spring, splash)
- It is important to positively reinforce your child's attempts to make speech sounds. Praise their good productions and help when they make a mistake.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Uses sentences averaging seven words in length
- Uses language that is complete in structure and form
- Uses number concepts such as *few, some, more*
- Completes analogies: *a bird flies, a fish...*
- Has developed the use of more complex sentences containing conjunctions: *and, then, as well, though, anyway, so, else*
- Immediately able to recall the main event of a story
- Follows three part directions
- Tells original stories that are appropriately sequenced and contain adequate information
- Anticipates outcomes and draws conclusions
- Recognises words of opposite (antonyms) or similar meanings (synonyms)
- Mostly uses adult-like grammar in sentences and conversation
- Can predict the next sequence of events and can tell a 4-5 part story
- Knows the meaning of today, yesterday and tomorrow
- Knows most opposites and the meaning of *through, away, toward, from*

Develop Your Six Year Old's Speech and Language by:

- Spending time each day when just the two of you can have a conversation
- Having your child help you read books, and reading more advanced books to him/her
- Talking about the books you have read together
- Encouraging them to tell *who, what, when, where, why* in their sentences and stories
- Helping your child write his/her own story-picture book
- Having your child act or make up stories
- Allowing your child to cook using a children's cook book with simple step by step instructions
- Letting your child watch videos or TV shows and then having him/her re-tell the story
- Defining new words and concepts to your child

- ACT as if you don't understand what your child has said. e.g., C: '*Him did it.*' P: '*What do you mean?*' C: '*Him did it.*' P: '*Oh you mean he did it.*'



- USE facial expressions and gestures to help express meaning.

- GIVE your child time to answer you or respond to your directions

- MAKE use of toys, empty containers and broken objects. These things will all stimulate your child's language.

- RAISE your child's awareness of correct and incorrect language forms.

- ASK open ended questions. e.g., '*What's happening? How did he...? What have you been doing?*' (questions to which you can't answer 'yes' or 'no').



- GIVE choices if your child is unsure of himself. e.g., '*Do you mean a clock or a watch?*'

- TALK about language itself. e.g., '*Caterpillar - that's a long word for such a little animal.*' or P: '*Which one is the box of Cornflakes?*' C: '*This one.*' P: '*Yes, you knew that because you saw the picture. Mummy knows because she saw the word. See here it is.*'

- TALK about story book pictures. Don't expect or demand silence while reading to your child.

- ASK leading questions. The adult asks the child 'scaffolding' questions when looking at books to help the child sequence ideas. e.g., '*What will happen next?*'

- TEACH the child how to think by explaining the subtle ideas and inferences of the child's experiences. Support and extend what the child may be thinking. Model other ideas, clarify, expand, explain what, why and how.

- TELL or read lots of well formed stories such as fairytales (e.g., Goldilocks and the Three Bears). These stories are well structured - i.e., there is a beginning, middle and end, with an introduction, problem, solution and resolution.





Speech & Language Development of the FOUR year old



SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

- ☉ By the end of the child's fourth year they should be confidently using the following sounds: p, b, m, w, ng (ring), h, d, n, k, g, y, f, & vowel sounds
- ☉ Your four year old may experience difficulties producing: t, v, sh, l, ch, j, s, z, zh (measure), r, th, and blends (sp, bl etc).
- ☉ It is important to positively reinforce your child's attempts to make speech sounds. Praise their good productions and help when they make a mistake.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- ☉ Uses sentences of 4 to 5 words
- ☉ Has a vocabulary of nearly 1500 words
- ☉ Understands some basic concepts such as position - in, on, under; size - big, little; colour and number
- ☉ Asks many questions
- ☉ Uses question words (where, what, when, why, how)
- ☉ Uses 'and' to join sentences
- ☉ Uses a variety of word types, eg. plurals, past tense
- ☉ Uses contractions such as 'it's a' or 'there's a'
- ☉ Uses language to reason, ask, show, tell and share
- ☉ Understands 2-3 part instructions
- ☉ Recalls events and stories
- ☉ Understands concepts of past, present and future time
- ☉ Is aware of environmental print (eg McDonalds sign)
- ☉ Tries to 'read'
- ☉ Enjoys role-play and simple jokes

Develop your Four Year Old's Speech and Language by...

- ☉ Repeating any immature sentences correctly
- ☉ encouraging recall of past events and prediction
- ☉ developing skills of problem solving and justification by talking about what you are doing and why
- ☉ helping you plan activities
- ☉ reading longer stories to your child, and reading humorous books
- ☉ letting your child tell and make up stories for you
- ☉ providing many opportunities for conversation
- ☉ repeating any words the child mispronounces clearly
- ☉ encouraging phonological awareness skills (rhyming, breaking words into syllables, emphasizing initial sounds of words)



Speech & Language Development of the FIVE year old



SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

- ☉ By the end of the child's fifth year they should be confidently using the following sounds: p, b, m, w, h, t, d, n, k, g, ng (ring), y, f, v, sh & vowels
- ☉ Your five year old may experience difficulties producing: l, ch, j, s, z, zh (measure), r, th, and blends (sp, bl etc).
- ☉ It is important to positively reinforce your child's attempts to make speech sounds. Praise their good productions and help when they make a mistake.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- ☉ Uses sentences averaging six words in length
- ☉ Tells others stories about their experiences and can retell a familiar story
- ☉ Asks for meanings and makes serious enquiries about abstract words
- ☉ Defines objects by their use (you eat with a fork) and can tell what objects are made of (a table is made from wood)
- ☉ 'Reads' by way of pictures
- ☉ Uses all pronouns correctly: he, she, his, her, them, they, himself etc
- ☉ Able to give the main idea or theme of a story
- ☉ Understands and uses prepositions: behind, below, near, beside, over, above
- ☉ Knows common opposites: big/little, hard/soft etc
- ☉ Understands the concepts of same and different
- ☉ Uses future, present and past tense
- ☉ Stays with an activity for 12-13 minutes
- ☉ Uses a variety of sentence types, some of which may be complex e.g., 'I can go inside after I take my boots off.'
- ☉ Asks questions for information

Develop your Five Year Old's Speech and Language by...

- ☉ encouraging your child to use language to express his/her feelings, ideas, dreams, wishes and fears.
- ☉ commenting on what you did or how you think your child feels; this will stimulate more language than a direct question
- ☉ allowing your child to create new, free designs with crayons, and pencils or paper. Encourage your child to express what they are doing and what they have made when completed.
- ☉ continuing to read longer stories to your child and talking about the story with them
- ☉ talking with him/her as you would an adult in most instances
- ☉ remembering that he/she will understand more than he/she will be able to say
- ☉ listening when your child talks to you