EYFS Phonics Information Meeting

Helping your child become a confident reader and writer

What we want you to leave knowing

Tonight is practical — you will try the same strategies your child uses.

1. How phonics works

Sounds → blending → reading → spelling and writing

2. What children learn

The broad Reception journey, with children moving at the pace they need

3. What to do at home

Short, positive practice that matches the way we teach in school

The most important message

You do not need to recreate a phonics lesson at home. A few minutes, often, makes a real difference.

Phonics in one minute

Phoneme

The sound we hear.
Example: /m/

Grapheme

The letter(s) that represent a sound.
Example: m, sh, ay

Blend

Push sounds together to read.
/m/ /a/ /t/ → mat

- Children learn to recognise sounds quickly and use them to decode unfamiliar words.
- Later, they learn that some sounds can be written in more than one way.



How Read Write Inc. works in Reception

- Phonics is taught every day and revisited frequently so learning becomes automatic.
- Children learn Set 1 sounds first, including ‘special friends’ such as sh, th, ch, qu, nk and ng.
- They learn to blend sounds to read words and use Fred Fingers to spell words.
- Children read texts matched closely to the sounds and words they can already read.
- We assess regularly and group children so teaching meets their next step.



Progress is not a race

Children may reach stages at different times. Secure knowledge matters more than rushing ahead.

Parent practice 1: saying the sounds clearly

We use ‘pure sounds’ because extra sounds can make blending harder.

Try these

m s f n l r

Keep them short: ‘mmmm’ not ‘muh’; ‘ssss’ not ‘suh’.

Why it matters

/c/ /a/ /t/ blends smoothly to cat.

‘cuh-a-tuh’ makes the word much harder to hear.

At home

Use the same sound pronunciation as school. If you are unsure, use the RWI sound videos/links shared by school rather than guessing.



Show adults: pure sounds video

Opens the official RWI parent/carer films.

Set 1: the first building blocks

Single-letter sounds

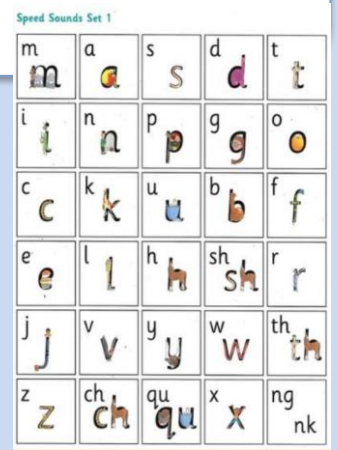
m a s d t i n p g o
c k u b f e l h r j v y w x z

Special friends

sh th ch qu ng nk
Two or more letters making one sound.

What ‘secure’ looks like

Your child can see a grapheme and say the sound quickly, without needing to work it out from the picture every time.



Parent tip

Practise a small number well — do not introduce lots of new sounds ahead of school.

Parent practice 2: Fred Talk and blending

Fred Talk

Fred can only speak in sounds:
‘c-a-t’ ‘sh-o-p’ ‘f-i-sh’

Blend

Say the sounds, then the whole word:
‘c-a-t … cat’

Fred in your head

As reading becomes easier, children blend quietly/internally for greater fluency.

- Try it together: s-u-n • ch-i-p • f-r-o-g
- Then make it playful: ‘Put on your c-oa-t’, ‘Find your c-u-p’, ‘Touch your h-ea-d’.



From sounds to words

1. Hear it

Oral Fred Talk
‘m-a-p’
Can your child hear ‘map’?

2. Read it

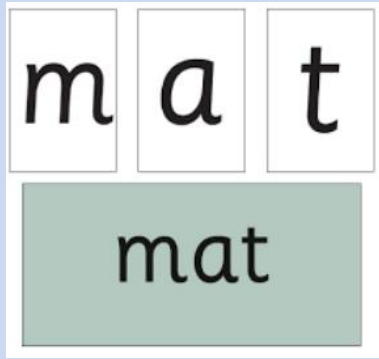
Spot special friends → say sounds → blend
sh-o-p → shop

3. Read it again

Re-reading builds speed and confidence. Familiar words gradually become automatic.

If your child gets stuck

Give the sound, model the blend, then let them try the whole word again. Keep the experience successful.



Parent practice 3: spelling with Fred Fingers

Say the word

‘ship’ — say it clearly and slowly.

Count the sounds

sh - i - p = 3 sounds → 3 Fred Fingers.

Write the sounds

Pinch each finger as you say the sounds, then write the graphemes: sh i p.

Remember

We praise children for using the sounds they know. Accurate spelling develops as their phonic knowledge grows.



Handwriting: sound, picture, phrase, movement

In school

Children learn the sound alongside a memorable picture and a formation phrase.

At home

Encourage the same formation. Large movements, finger tracing, chalk and paint can come before pencil practice.

Keep it manageable

A few careful letters are more useful than a whole page completed with an incorrect formation.

Try it tonight

Choose one sound your child knows. Say it → 'write' it in the air → trace it with a finger → write it once or twice.



Reading at home: two different jobs

1. Your child reads to you

Use the matched phonics book/word work.

Let them use sounds and blending. Re-read to build fluency. Celebrate effort and success.

2. You read to your child

Share rich storybooks that may be beyond their independent reading level.

Talk about characters, new words, predictions and favourite parts.



Both matter

Phonics teaches children how to read the words; shared stories help them become readers who understand and love books.

Words that are not fully decodable yet

In RWI

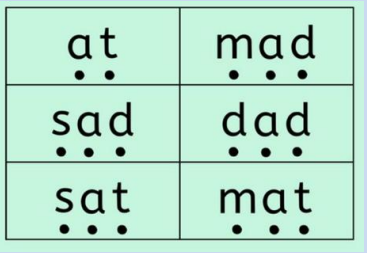
Children meet ‘red words’ — words containing a part they cannot yet read using the sounds they know.

How to help

Practise the words school sends home. Notice the tricky part, say the word, then revisit it little and often.

Avoid

Do not ask children to memorise long lists of unrelated words. Keep practice matched to what they are learning.



The Reception journey across the year

This is a broad guide — assessment determines each child's exact next step.

Autumn

- Build secure Set 1 sounds
- Begin oral Fred Talk and blending
- Read simple words
- Start Word Time / ditties when ready
- Use Fred Fingers for spelling
- Build correct letter formation

Spring

- Secure and speed up Set 1
- Read longer words and sentences
- Read matched storybooks as ready
- Build fluency through re-reading
- Spell using known sounds
- Begin Set 2 sounds when ready

Summer

- Read with increasing fluency
- Apply phonics in sentences/books
- Develop Set 2 knowledge as appropriate
- Write words/phrases/sentences
- Re-read writing
- Prepare for the next stage of RWI



A simple 5–10 minute home routine

1 minute

Speedy sounds
Choose a few sounds already taught.

2 minutes

Fred Talk
Say 3–5 words orally and blend them together.

3–5 minutes

Read
Use the matched book/words. Re-read familiar text.

1–2 minutes

Write
One sound or one word using Fred Fingers.

Stop while it is still positive

Little and often is better than a long session when your child is tired.



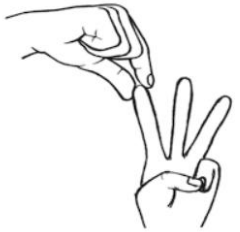
Helpful prompts to use at home

Try saying…

“What sound is this?”
“Can you Fred Talk it?”
“Spot the special friends.”
“Say the sounds, then blend.”
“How many sounds can you hear?”
“Show me on your Fred Fingers.”
“Let’s read that sentence again smoothly.”

Try to avoid…

Giving letter names when your child needs the sound.
Adding ‘uh’ to pure sounds.
Telling the whole word immediately.
Pushing on when your child is tired or frustrated.
Teaching lots of new sounds at



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Phonics without worksheets

On the way home

I spy a /s/…
Fred Talk signs or objects.

At bath/bedtime

Find rhymes, clap words, share a favourite story, Fred Talk ‘b-e-d’.

Around the house

Magnetic letters, labels, shopping lists, cards and notes give writing a real purpose.

Best of all: talk

Explain new words, ask questions, retell stories and listen to your child. Language and comprehension sit alongside phonics.



If your child is finding phonics difficult

- Keep practice short and use sounds/words your child has already been taught.
- Model first: ‘My turn’ → practise together → ‘Your turn’.
- Return to oral Fred Talk if looking at the letters is too demanding.
- Re-read familiar books to build confidence and automaticity.
- Please speak to us. We can show you exactly what your child is working on and the best next step.



We are working together

Home practice should support confidence — never become a battle.

Three things to remember

1. Say sounds clearly

Pure sounds make blending easier.

2. Practise little and often

5–10 positive minutes is enough.

3. Read together every day

Let your child practise decoding — and keep reading wonderful stories to them.

Thank you for supporting your child's reading journey. Questions are very welcome.

