



Games to play at home to support your child with phonics

Phonics is a vital part of learning to read, and is usually the first strategy children learn in becoming confident lifelong readers.

Phonics instruction refers to the process of helping children learn the relationships between letters and the sounds they make. For example, children learn that the letter b represents the sound /b/, and that it is the first letter in words such as ball, boots, bear and bee.

One of the best ways for young children to begin learning phonics is through playing phonics games and activities that make the learning process fun and engaging. Below are some ideas on how you can carry out phonics games and activities at home.

Fun phonics games and activities

1. Letter Races

This game requires a magnetic board, magnetic letters, and a lot of space! Set up the magnetic board on one side of the room, and place the magnetic letters in a basket or bowl on the other side. Call out a sound, or a word starting or ending in a particular sound. Then ask your child (with a ready, set, go!) to pick out the correct magnetic letters and run over as fast as they can to stick it on the board.

2. I Spy the Sound

'I Spy the Sound' is a fun way to build phonics skills and phonemic awareness. In this variation of the classic game, 'I Spy', ask your child to spy words that begin with a certain sound, rather than a letter. For example, "I spy with my little eye, something beginning with mmm."

3. Matching Rhymes

Rhymes help children understand that sounds in our language have meaning and follow certain patterns. Find a corkboard or something you can stick pins into. Write down a list of words on one side of a sheet of paper, and on the other side write down words that rhyme with these words, but in a different order. Then stick pins next to each word. Give your child some rubber bands and ask them to match the

rhyming words on each side of the page by placing the rubber bands on the pins to connect the rhyming pair.

4. Phonics Hopscotch

This game helps children develop their ability to match letters to their sounds. All you need for this fun phonics activity is a piece of chalk and the ground. Simply draw hopscotch markings on the ground (how many squares and in what shape they are arranged is up to you). In each square draw a letter of the alphabet (you may want to draw both the upper and lower case letters in each). There are many ways you can play this game – you can call out a letter or combination of letters and ask your child to jump on those letters, and as they do, for them to sound out each letter. Or you can ask your child to jump on the letters in alphabetical order, sounding them out as they go along. You can also roll dice and ask your child to jump to the square that matches the number rolled, counting the squares as they jump and sounding the letter out at the end.