



Welcome to Jolly Phonics Step 1!

Dear Parents

We are excited to begin your child's reading and writing journey with Jolly Phonics. This programme uses Systematic Synthetic Phonics, a clear and proven method of teaching children to read and write. This letter contains information and guidance about how your child will be taught.

In Step 1, children learn the **42 main letter sounds of English**. They begin with simple single sounds such as s, a, t, i, p, n and then move on to digraphs – two letters that make one sound (such as sh, ch, th, ai). They will learn to blend these sounds together to read words and to listen for the sounds to spell them.

Learning the Letter Sounds

The letter sounds are not introduced in alphabetical order. The order chosen enables many short regular words to be used immediately for reading and writing. The sounds have been broken down into 7 groups to make it easier for the children to learn them. For each letter sound there is an action, which helps the children remember the sounds the letters make.

As there are more sounds in English than there are letters, some sounds are represented by digraphs. **Digraphs are where two letters are used to represent one sound**, such as <sh> for /sh/ as in ship, <oa> for /oa/ as in goat.

English has many alternative spellings but initially we teach only one way of writing each sound, eg for the /ai/ sound in the word 'rain' we teach <ai>. In Step 2, the alternatives <a-e> as in 'cake' and <ay> as in 'play' are added.



Sound Books



Your child will bring home a 'Sound Book'. As each new sound is taught the letter/s will be stuck into it. Try to go through the sound book each day, with your child saying the sounds.

Letter Sound Sheets

As each group is taught, your child may bring home a sheet with letters sounds on for you to cut up and use for various activities with your child.

If you have time, you can play some games and activities that can help your child learn in a fun way.

Fun Activities & Games

Pairs game

This is very useful for developing memory and reasoning, as well as learning the letter sounds. To play, The letters are placed face down. Each player takes it in turns to turn over two cards, saying the sound on each card. If the sounds are the same, the player keeps the cards and has another turn. If not, the cards are turned back over and the next player has a turn. The player with most pairs wins.

Reading words

Arrange the letters to make short, simple regular words. With your child blend the sounds together to read the words.

Building words

Say a simple regular word, eg sat. Your child has to listen for the sounds, pick up the letters that make those sounds, and lay them in the correct order. You can then check whether the word is correct by blending the sounds to read the word.



Letter Formation

In class your child will be taught to form the letters accurately and to hold their pencil correctly. The pencil rests between the thumb and the first finger; the next finger prevents the pencil falling down, and the last two fingers are tucked away. This pencil hold applies equally to left and right handed children. Once an incorrect pencil hold has developed, it is very difficult to correct it later.



Activities to play on the go!

- Spot letters on signs or packages and say their sounds.
- Play sound games: “What’s this word? /s-u-n/”.
- Play “Which word starts with...?” (e.g. Which word starts with /s/ - sun or dog).
- Play I spy with my little eye, something beginning with?

Parent Support Matters

Children make more progress when their learning is reinforced at home. Your encouragement builds both confidence and enjoyment of reading and writing. However, if your child is tired or time is short then leave it for a better time.

With your support and enthusiasm, your child will continue to grow into a confident and happy reader. Thank you for all that you do to make learning such a positive experience at home.

