A special educational needs resource for parents

Helping your child @ home



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We hope you find the suggestions in this leaflet useful in helping your child.

The most important things you can give to your child are your time and attention.

REMEMBER:

Many children have a slow pace of learning and will need lots of repetition.
Results and progress can be slow – don't give up.
Every child is different – find what works for your child.
If you don't feel things are going well, don't worry, talk to your child's class teacher or special educational needs coordinator.

Be realistic and fair on yourself and your child.
Everyone has a bad day once in a while.
If you or your child is stressed, STOP!
Tomorrow is another day.

And finally, try to make your time together fun! Remember we all like to know we are doing well and like to be praised for trying. Don't forget those important smiles, hugs and words of praise such as "Well done!"

Speaking and Listening

Spending time talking to and listening to your child is very important throughout their childhood. Here are some general guidelines when talking to your child during the day.

1. Use your child's name first to attract attention e.g. "David, look at this".
2. Get down to the child's level so that you can make good eye contact and they can see your face and expression.
3. With young children join them playing and take the lead from them, commenting on what they are doing e.g. "You've got the blue brick. I've got the red one. You're making a lovely tall tower".
4. If your child makes a comment when playing e.g. "car" add another word or two in your reply e.g. "it's a big car". "It's a red car".
5. Talk about everyday activities as you are doing them e.g. "I'm washing the dishes. Do you want to help?" Talk through the sequence e.g. "I'm going to put the water in the sink and add some washing up liquid".
6. Stress the important words e.g. put your **shoes**…. in the **cupboard.**
7. You may need to keep your sentences short. Break sequenced instructions up, giving one idea at a time e.g. "Take your shoes off" when the child has done that continue with "Hang up your coat" and then "put the telly on". This is easier than ".Before you put the telly on put your shoes in the cupboard and hang your coat up".

Speaking and Listening

8. Try and use positive rather than negative statements e.g. “Hang your coat up and then switch on the telly” rather than “Don’t switch on the telly until you’ve hung up your coat”.
9. Use lots of gesture and facial expression when talking.
10. Don’t ask too many questions. Talk about your day as well asking about your child’s e.g. rather than asking “What did you have for school lunch today?” comment about your lunch “I had a cheese sandwich for my lunch” this might prompt your child to tell you what they had.
11. Try to find a quiet time without the telly, radio or music on when you can talk to your child, look at a picture book, read a story, play a game etc. This doesn’t have to be a long time, just 5 – 10 minutes is good. They are never too old to listen to a story!
12. If your child’s sentence doesn’t sound right e.g. “car goed fast”, rephrase so they hear good examples e.g. “your car **went** very fast”.
13. If your child doesn’t say a word right e.g. “boon please” for spoon, rephrase so they hear good examples e.g. “yes, I’ll get you a **spoon**.”
14. Share some of your child’s TV time with them, talking about what is happening and might happen.
15. It takes a long time to develop good communication skills – keep going!



Reading

Please note:
In the early stages of learning to read and spell children need to learn letter sounds NOT letter names. It is also important to say the sound correctly e.g.‘s’ not ‘suh’.
The best thing you can do to help your child is **to** read to them and **with** them as often as possible, as an enjoyable time together. It’s a good idea to do this in a *quiet place*, for a few minutes every day.



When you are reading **to** your child:

1. This is meant to be an enjoyable, stress-free time together. Listening for pleasure!
2. If you are not sure which books to read, ask your child’s teacher or library staff for advice.
3. It may be that they need to share **picture** books with you, rather than being able to listen to a long story.
4. When ready, choose a story but don’t read the words in the book just simplify and tell the main events of the story, talking about the pictures.
5. Children often like to hear the same story repeated several or even many times.
6. If your child ‘spots’ a familiar letter or word in the book you are reading, that’s a bonus.
7. And remember, children are never too old to listen to a story!

Reading

When your child is reading to you:

1. Talk about the story looking at the cover / pictures before you start reading to ‘guess’ what it might be about.
2. Encourage them to ‘spot’ letters or words they know.
3. Use sounds in the words to help the child ‘read’ words.
4. They may be able to say individual sounds and put them together (blend) to read the word e.g. m-a-n = man. Some words are tricky and children just need to learn the word as a whole e.g. like, come.
5. Don’t let your child struggle for too long to read a word – tell them what it is.
6. Talk about what you have read to make sure they have understood it asking questions such who? what? where?
7. Encourage your child to guess what might happen next.
8. Children like to read the same book several / many times.
9. When you finish a book, encourage your child to recall what happened and retell the story in their own words.
10. If you or your child becomes stressed—STOP!

Reading

If your child brings letters or words to learn at home, try and make it fun, playing games, by:

1. Turning the word cards / letter cards upside down and taking turns to choose and read. If your child can read the word, they keep the card. Encourage other family members to join in.
2. Make a second set of cards and play Find the Pair, Snap or Bingo.
3. Encourage your child to 'spot' their letters or words outside (signs, supermarket etc), in newspapers, books at home, on the television etc.

A home/school book is a really good way of letting the teacher know what you have been doing at home and how your child is getting on.



Handwriting

The best thing you can do to help your child is to have different things to write with in the house e.g. crayons, pencils, pens, chalk and felt tips.

From an early age encourage your child to hold their pencil like this:



It may be that your child takes time to decide which hand they prefer to write with. Don't worry about this. Let them practice with both.

The following activities will help your child develop good pencil control:

- Squeezing clothes pegs
- Threading beads
- Rolling play dough
- Flicking paper
- Popping bubble wrap





It is important to encourage your child to form letters correctly always starting in the right place. This is very important when they begin to join letters together. Lined paper will help with letter size and neatness.
Ask the teacher what handwriting style they use. They should be able to give you a copy of this. Activities such as tracing and dot to dot will help your child with pencil control.

Handwriting

If your child finds handwriting very difficult they may need more practice with bigger movements e.g. painting patterns on large paper, using decorating paintbrush and water to paint patterns on outside walls/ground and writing giant letters in the air using their fingers or fist.



Spelling

We spell in two ways:

1. **Sounding out** (segmenting) – some words can be spelt as they sound e.g. c-a-t, s-t-o-p and p-l-a-n-t.
   When your child is trying to spell a word:

   i. Your child will need to know a few letters sounds e.g. **s a t p i n**, before they are ready for spelling.
   ii. If your child is still learning to recognise letters, talk to the class teacher to see how you can help.
   iii. To spell a word you have to break (segment) the word into individual sounds e.g. the word ***dog*** is made up of three sounds d-o-g.
   iv. You could ask your child
      - What is the first sound you can hear in 'dog'?
      - Encourage them to write the appropriate letter
      - Continue with the rest of the word in the same way e.g. What's the next sound? What's the last sound?

   Sometimes your child might benefit from having the alphabet on show (magnetic letters or written alphabet), so that once they have identified the sound, the letter shape is on show to help them form the letter.

2. **Tricky words** - some words are more tricky and we need to remember how they look e.g. said, come, like, the, was, of and they.

   These words should not be sounded out as it does not help e.g. sounding the word ***was*** we would end up with a spelling 'woz'.

   The teacher might give your child some words to learn and will be able to tell you ways they teach tricky words.

Spelling

You could help by:

1. Encouraging your child to look closely at the word e.g. ***said*** and then 'take a photograph' in their head. Close their eyes and try and remember the photograph and then write it down.
2. Identifying the tricky bit of the word e.g. the ***s*** and ***d*** are the easy bit of the word as you can hear them. The ***ai*** is the tricky bit and your child has to learn this.
3. Using a multi sensory approach e.g. look at the word ***said*** (which should be written in large print), say the word out loud, trace over the word with your finger and then write it in the air with your finger. Close your eyes and trace it in the air. Open your eyes and write the word then check.
4. Older children may find using mnemonics a helpful way to remember words. e.g. the word ***said*** can be remembered using the phrase '***S***ally ***A***nn ***i***s ***d***ancing', ***ants*** by using the phrase '***a***nts ***n***ever ***y***awn' and ***are*** as '***a***re ***r***ats ***e***ating'.

Maths

Talking to your child about mathematics is important. You are probably doing a lot of mathematics at home already without realising it.

The following suggestions may help you:

1. Sing number rhymes and songs e.g. ‘One, two, buckle my shoe’, Ten green bottles, ‘There were ten in a bed’.

2. Play games e.g. Snakes and Ladders, Ludo, cards, dominoes, darts, snooker, jigsaws.

3. Look for numbers around you e.g. in books, on buses, road signs and in the supermarket.

4. Make a shop using toys, food, books etc– take it in turns to be the shopkeeper, use real money.

5. Cooking – weigh the ingredients, count spoonfuls, let your child help set the timer.

6. Look out for, and talk about, patterns and shapes – e.g. wallpaper, plants, buildings and tiles.

7. Add counters, dice, dominoes, pack of cards, different shapes, purse full of change, a ruler, tape measure and timer to their toy collection.

8. Use dot-to-dot books to help your child learn the sequence of numbers.

Maths

9. Look at clocks, both digital and analogue. Play games e.g. how long is a minute, starting from now. Work out how long it is until their next mealtime. Use magazines to check what time their favourite TV programme is on.

10. Use calendars to help with days and months.



Remember maths at home is meant to be fun!




everychild
matters


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