

Phase 1 Phonics

It splits it into six phases. This is going to focus on phase one.

This phase is usually started in nursery or preschool, and is probably the most important phase, as it supports the development of speaking and listening skills, and lays the foundations for the rest of phonic work.

The aim is to help children explore and experiment with sounds and words. It encourages them to listen carefully and identify sounds. The phase is split into seven 'aspects':

- 1) Sounds in the environment
- 2) Instrumental sounds
- 3) Body Percussion
- 4) Rhymes and Rhythm
- 5) Alliteration
- 6) Voice Sounds
- 7) Oral blending and segmenting

Each section will give you a few ideas that you can do at home to support this phase.

Sounds in the environment

This one is easy! It is literally thinking about all the sounds we hear around us in our everyday life. When you go out, stop and listen to the sounds you can hear, and see if your child can identify them. Harrison loves listening out for aeroplanes and birds. Go on a sound scavenger hunt. Collect some pictures of things you think you will hear and stick them on paper. When your child hears that sound, they can tick it off. You can do it inside as well. When you actually stop and listen there are so many noises we hear all the time - floorboards squeaking, boilers humming etc. Other activities you

could try:

- *hiding an egg timer in a room and try to find it using the ticking sound
- *read stories with animals in and make the sounds
- *put toy animals in a bag/box - child has to guess which animal it is from the sound (or vice versa!)
- *Sing songs such as 'Old MacDonald' and 'The Wheels on the Bus

Instrumental Sounds

This aspect focuses on sounds made with instruments and house makers. If you don't have musical instrument toys they are very easy to make - an empty bottle with dried rice, an old tin or tub and spoon, saucepan lids...be creative! Demonstrate making a sound and then let your child try to copy it. You can make this progressively more difficult. You could also use instruments to accompany stories and nursery rhymes - drums for giant's footsteps, shaker for rain.

Body Percussion

This one is all about the sounds you can make with your body. I know my two boys are particularly good at using a certain part of their body to make sounds, but not sure that counts. You can clap, stamp, click fingers, pat knees etc. Perform a pattern of sounds using your body and get them to copy. Play 'Simon Says - Simon Says clap hands/click fingers' etc. There are lots of songs and chants - 'if you're happy and you know it' is one that all kids love. Here are some more chants you could try:

*Clap them, clap them, clap them so,
Clap them high, clap them low,
Clap them left, clap them right
Clap them, clap them out of sight*

*Two little feet go tap tap tap,
Two little hands go clap clap clap,
I stand up quietly by my chair,
Two little arms raise high in the air,
Two little feet go jump jump jump,
Two little fists go thump thump thump
One little body goes round and round
One little child sits quietly down*

Rhyme and Rhythm

This aspect aims to get children to recognise and appreciate rhyme and rhythm. Try singing nursery rhymes - once familiar with the words, substitute the rhyming words for new ones and have fun making up silly versions! Think about 'Row the Boat':

Row down the STREAM and don't forget to SCREAM when you see the crocodile

Row down the RIVER and don't forget to SHIVER when you see the polar bear

Row down the SHORE and don't forget to ROAR when you see the lion

You could match up rhyming words pairs - you just need some paper or card, draw/stick on/print pictures of pairs of rhyming words (e.g. man and van) and try and match them. Kids love 'I Spy', so make it into a rhyming version...'I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with cat'.

Alliteration

Alliteration is a group of words that start with the same sound. Don't confuse this with starting with the same letter - both cook and chef start with the same letter but are totally different sounds! Tongue twisters are great fun for exploring alliteration, and you can

create your own as they occur in everyday life - Harrison's hairy hat, Alex's amazing apple (OK, so they're rubbish examples but you get the idea?!).

Create a sensory box with lentils/shaving foam/sand/rice etc and hide two sets of objects starting with two initial letter sounds in there (e.g dice, dinosaur, duck, dog and car, cat, cap and candle). Children hunt them out and then sort them onto trays or in hoops according to the sounds. When they add a new object, recite the contents of that set so they can hear the sounds together.

Voice Sounds

This literally explores sounds we can make with our voices. Think about the sounds - hissing, cooing, wheezing, whistling, clicking, humming, hooting. Show pictures of things and try and come up with appropriate sounds for it - 'brrrrrrriiiiing' for a telephone etc. Encourage them to look in a mirror whilst making the noises to see how the shape of their mouth changes for each sound. Read through stories and use your voice as sound effects.

Blending and Segmenting

Not as scary as it sounds, honestly! It's all about breaking down words into individual sounds. It is vital that children understand how words can be broken down and as that is what phonics is based around. Model segmenting and blending words (start off with CVC words, which are explained [here](#)) For example:

"Let's go and feed the d-o-g, dog"

"Put on your h-a-t, hat"

With a selection of familiar objects play 'I spy' - "I spy with my little eye a f-i-sh' / c-a-t / s-o-ck, and see if they can guess from the segmented words, and vice versa.