

Preschool Phonics Phase 1.6 Voice Sounds

A Guide for Parents

Preschool and nursery phonics focuses on pre-reading skills. These are speaking and listening skills, being able to distinguish the sounds they hear, patterns of speech, and sounds of speech. Phase 1 of the phonics programme is split into seven aspects; each builds on the previous aspect.

This guide introduces the sixth aspect of Phase 1 Phonics: Voice Sounds.

The previous aspects of Phase 1 phonics have focused on listening skills. Of course, children are always encouraged to use their language by singing, repeating, rhyming and speaking, but it is this aspect that focuses on making specific sounds with your voice.

Next, try the sounds we make that are responses to things, rather than words, such as, 'ooh' or 'ahh'. Join in together making these sounds.

Rather than making specific letter sounds, first, involve your child in using their voice to make sounds that copy the environmental sounds they hear. Try chugging trains, car sounds, ticking clocks, animal sounds, plops and whooshes.

Use voice sounds in everyday life. Together, copy the sounds you hear when you are out and about.

Have a hand-held mirror, or one mounted at your child's height. You may even have mirrored wardrobes that you can stand in front of so they can see their faces as they make the sounds.

If your child is having difficulty making a variety of voice sounds, their speech is not clear, or if the sounds your child is making are distinctly different from the sound they think they are making, speak to your Health Visitor or your child's Key Person in their childcare setting. They will be able to advise you of the specific needs for your child and whether to recommend a course of speech and language therapy.

At nurseries, preschools and childminders, the children will usually develop voice sounds during every session, through play. Small world train sets and car garages, doll's house play set-ups, and role-playing set-ups all encourage children to add their own sound effects. Children are also encouraged to speak and use their voices when adults and children are speaking together 1-1 or in small groups.



The most important thing you can do is make time to listen to your child. Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones and really listen to them!