

## Helping Your Child To Read

### Teaching Reading through games.

It is vital that early reading experiences are happy and positive. The aim should be not just for children to learn to read, but to enjoy reading. Whilst games may appear to be an indirect approach, they do protect a child from the sense of failure. By 'playing together' both parent and child are relaxed. Where a child could feel pressured in a formal teaching situation he/she will usually enjoy reading activities in a 'play' situation.

### The Sounds of Letters

Tips for teaching your child the sounds:

- It is important for a child to learn lower case or small letters rather than capital letters at first. Most early books and games use lower case letters and your child will learn these first at school. Obviously you should use a capital letter when required such as at the beginning of the child's name e.g. Joe
- When you talk about letters to your child remember to use the letter sounds: **a buh cuh duh e** ...rather than the alphabet names of the letters: **ay bee see dee ee**. The reason for this is that sounding out words is practically impossible if you use the alphabet names e.g. cat, would sound like: **see ay tee**
- When saying the sounds of **b, d, g, j** and **w** you will notice the 'uh' sound which follows, for example buh, duh... You can not say the sound without it, however, try to emphasize the main letter sound.

### Sounds games to play at home.....

- **Common Objects** - Collect several objects that begin with the same sound and make a card with this letter sound on it. Make a second group of objects beginning with a different sound and a card to go with those. Discuss the sounds of the letters on the two cards with your child and shuffle the objects. Separate the cards on the floor and ask your child to put each object near the sound that it starts with. This activity can help your child to 'hear' the first sound of a word.
- **Odd-one Out** - Say a number of words, all but one of which begin with the same sound. See if your child can pick out the odd one. It can be helpful to have the corresponding objects there for the child to look at.
- **I-Spy** - For small children the usual way of playing that starts 'I spy with my little eye something that begins with ....' Can be too difficult. You can make this easier by providing a clue. 'I spy with my little eye something that barks and begins with d'.

- **Sounds Scrapbook** - Write a letter at the top of each page of a scrapbook. Concentrating on a few letters at a time collect pictures of objects that begin with those letters. Stick pictures on the appropriate pages.

## Games for Recognising Letter Shapes....

- **Fishing for sounds** - You will need a few cards with individual letters. Attach a paper clip to each card. Using a small stick with a string and magnet, your child fishes for letter sounds. If your child can say the sound of the letter he/she wins the card, otherwise you win it.
- **Sequencing the letters in your child's name** - Providing the individual letter cards for each letter of your child's first name can be a useful way to teach the sequence of letters. Remember you will need to write a capital for the first letter and lower case for the rest. Show your child how to make the name first, before shuffling the cards for him/her to have a try. For a very long name work with the first few and build up a letter at a time.
- **What does it start with? Box** - You will need a box, several items each beginning with a different sound, corresponding letter cards  
This game is similar to the common objects game mentioned earlier, but the emphasis now is on recognising the sounds the letters make. Ask your child to choose an object from the box, to think what its first sound is and then to match the object with the relevant card.
- **Sand tray or Finger paints** - Children enjoy writing letters with their fingers in a tray of sand or with finger paints. These ways provide good opportunities to teach correct letter formation.