**Supporting your child with learning letter sounds**

1. **Phonological awareness**

Children first of all need to have a broad awareness of sounds – hearing sounds through songs, listening, rhymes, alliteration, syllable clapping – in other words playing with sounds to help discriminate different sounds.

1. **Phonemic awareness**

Good phonological awareness helps with understanding the smaller units within sounds called – phonemes – of which there are 44 in the English language. These smaller units isolate the sounds.

Please do not teach your child the names of the letters, they need to learn the **letter sounds** first.

Eg. m is not ‘*em’ but ‘mmmm’.*  The website [www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk) has a really good section on the correct letter sounds as well as lots of other useful resources for helping your child with sounds.

1. **Phonic awareness**

Gradually they will learn to match sounds to letters (graphemes) when they have a good grasp and understanding of 1 & 2 above. This is phonic awareness and they use this knowledge when they are reading and writing. Eg. the phonic sound or letter sound ‘mmmm’ is represented as a ‘m’. This is done at Tiggy’s using sandpaper letters, our large moveable alphabet and pink word cards – please ask if you would like to see how these are used.

**Best things to do:**

* Use letter sounds at all times NEVER letter names
* Play I spy with letter sounds

 “I Spy with my little eye something beginning with the letter sound .......” .

* Talk about letter sounds that you see all around - doesn’t matter if they are capitals at this stage as it is the sound not the shape that is more important to begin with eg road signs or supermarket names.
* Blend sounds - **Blending is a vital skill for reading.** The separate sounds (phonemes) of the word are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word. This merging together is called blending. . For example, the adult would say ***c-a-t = cat.***

Try breaking down simple words when you are giving instructions or asking questions such as ‘Can you find your h-a-t hat?’ ‘Where is the c-a-t cat?’ It is really important to say the sounds (phonemes) aloud, in order, all through the word.

* Alliteration - **Alliteration is a lot of fun to play around with.** Your child’s name can be a good place to start, e.g. Say ‘Gurpreet gets the giggles’, ‘Milo makes music’, ‘Naheema’s nose’, ‘Carl caught a cat’, ‘Jolly Jessie jumped’, ‘Tina is talking’. Encourage other family members to have a go, e.g. ‘Mummy munches muffins’, ‘Daddy is doing the dishes’.

Emphasise alliteration in songs and stories, e.g. ‘Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers’.

Play around with familiar songs to emphasise alliteration such as ‘Old MacDonald had some sheep, shoes, shorts, with a sh sh here and a sh sh there’.

Identify the odd one out, e.g. cat, cup, boy, car.

Make up little nonsense stories together using lots of alliteration.

Collect items from the park, the garden and around the house that start with the same sound.

When shopping think about items you are buying and say ‘A tall tin of tomatoes’, ‘A lovely little lemon’. Encourage your child to do the same.

* Rhymes – in books, songs, stories – make up your own and encourage your child to do the same
* Make it fun and not a chore!
* None of this needs any writing down so it can be done anytime, anywhere!