

# What is Letters and Sounds?

The first part of letters and sounds is called phase One. It concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2 in Reception. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and begin developing skills to break down the sounds in words ready for reading and writing.

Phase 1 is divided into seven aspects. Each aspect contains three strands: Tuning in to sounds, Listening and remembering sounds and Talking about sounds.

## **Aspect 1 - General sound discrimination - environmental**

The aim of this aspect is to raise children's awareness of the sounds around them and to develop their listening skills. Activities that you could do include: going on a listening walk, using a stick to drum on different items outside and comparing the sounds (loud, quiet, quick, slow), playing a sounds lotto game and making shakers.

## **Aspect 2 - General sound discrimination - instrumental sounds**

This aspect aims to develop children's awareness of sounds made by various instruments and noise makers. Activities you could do include: comparing and matching sound makers, playing instruments alongside a story and making loud and quiet sounds.

## **Aspect 3 - General sound discrimination - body percussion**

The aim of this aspect is to develop children's awareness of sounds and rhythms.

Activities you could do include: singing songs and action rhymes such as nursery rhymes and listening to and talking about music.

## **Aspect 4 - Rhythm and rhyme**

This aspect aims to develop children's appreciation and experiences of rhythm and rhyme in speech. Activities you could do include: reading rhyming stories, playing rhyming bingo, clapping out the syllables (sounds) in their name and other words.

### **Aspect 5 - Alliteration**

The focus is on initial sounds of words for example in their name my name Sophie begins with “sssss”. It is important to talk to the children about the sounds the letters make rather than the letter names at this stage. Activities including I-Spy type games and matching objects which begin with the same sound will help but remember not to add “uh” on the end of sounds saying “suh” or “muh” they are “sssss” and “mmmmm”.

### **Aspect 6 - Voice sounds**

The aim is to distinguish between different vocal sounds and to begin oral blending and segmenting simple words for example the sounds in cat “c-a-t”, coat “c-oa-t”. You could ask your child to feed pictures of objects into a toy robot's mouth and say the sounds out the name of the object in a robot voice – “c-u-p, cup”.

### **Aspect 7 - Oral blending and segmenting**

In this aspect, the main aim is to develop oral blending and segmenting skills.

To practise oral blending you could sound out a word for example “d-o-g” and see if your child can identify the item from a group of objects. For segmenting practise you could hold up an object such as a sock and ask the children which sounds they can hear in the word sock.

At All Saints Nursery we also introduce the letters (grapheme's) that represent each sound (phoneme) alongside aspect 7 which are introduced in phase two. This helps prepare children for their daily phonics session in Reception Class where the emphasis is on phase two and three.

The following the website has some good games that you could try at home.

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1-games.html>