

At Wellesley Park we teach children to read and spell using phonics. Phonics works by breaking words down into its individual sounds. There are 44 different sounds in the English language and these can be represented in different ways. Learning to recognise all of the different sounds and how each sound can be represented (often in different ways) is a complicated process. Once children have learned enough sounds, they can use their new skills to sound the individual parts in a word and then blend them to read or spell. However, it is important for children to also learn that they will be unable to sound out some words (defined as common exception words and at Wellesley Park called 'tricky words') because they do not follow the same rules. These words, such as 'the' and 'you' need to be recognised on sight. It is therefore very important that children are taught phonics in a systematic way so that children build their knowledge and skills in a supportive and logical way.

At Wellesley Park we follow Letters and Sounds programme. The programme is divided into 6 phases, which gives a systematic structure but allows staff to move between phases to support children in their different rates of learning. During the programme, new skills are taught, continually revisiting and building upon previous learning.

Phase 1

This is the beginning of learning to read and spell and is the main focus during preschool, although children will still practise these skills throughout the other phases. The children will not actually be taught to recognise letters. Instead, they will be exposed to a language-rich environment, playing lots of games and taking part in activities that give children the experience in making, recognising and playing with sounds.

- Aspect 1: Environmental Sounds
 - Children are exposed to a variety of sounds in the environment, being encouraged to have fun copying and playing with them.
- Aspect 2: Instrumental Sounds
 - Children are encouraged to listen to and make sounds using different instruments.
- Aspect 3: Body Percussion
 - Children use their body to accompany songs and rhymes, for example, by clapping and tapping.
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and Rhyme
 - Children are exposed to a range of books and rhymes. Children are encouraged to join in with repeated refrains and rhymes.
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
 - Children are encouraged to listen to initial sounds within words. They are asked to think of other words beginning with the same sound.
- Aspect 6: Voice Sounds
 - Children are asked to create different mouth movements and say a range of sounds.
- Aspect 7: Oral Blending and Segmenting
 - This stage is vital before children are exposed to learning which letters (graphemes) represent each sound. It is done orally and is to encourage children to hear that words are made up from separate sounds.
 - Oral Blending:

- At first, the adult will show the children how this is done. The separate sounds (phonemes) are clearly spoken aloud, in order, fairly quickly, and are then merged together into the whole word. For example:

m-a-n man

- The merging of sounds together is called blending. Initially, children may not be able to merge sounds together on their own and will need frequent practise through adult modelling and copying.
- Oral Segmenting:
 - This is the opposite to oral blending. Here, children hear the whole word before it is broken down into separate sounds (phonemes). For example:

dog d-o-g

- This skill is called segmenting and is vital in order for children to be able to spell. Initially, children might only be able to hear the initial sound and will lots of modelling by adults.

Phase 2 – usually during early Reception

This phase builds upon oral blending and segmenting of the previous phase. Children must continue to practise what they have learnt. They will also be taught the grapheme-phoneme representations (a specific sound that is written by a specific letter) for 19 letters. They will also learn that some phonemes (sounds) can be represented by more than one letter e.g. **zip**, **buzz**.

Children will learn the sounds in the following order:

Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5
s a t p	i n m d	g o c k	ck e u r	h b f,ff l, ll ss

The process of learning a phoneme includes:

- Practising making the phoneme.
- Saying a number of words that start with the phoneme.
- Showing the children the letter that represents the phoneme.
- Showing the children a picture that will help them remember the phoneme and how to form the letter.

During this phase, children will be taught to read different words using the sounds and letters they have been exposed to. They will start by learning words that have one vowel phoneme, followed by one consonant phoneme (VC words) e.g. **an**, **it**. CVC words are words that have a consonant, then a vowel and then a consonant, e.g. **cat**, **pen**. Some words such as **bell** are also CVC words because they only have three phonemes.

It is also important during this phase that children use 'pure sounds' when saying phonemes. This means that as much as possible the 'uh' sound after a consonant should not be said. E.g. the 'd' phoneme should be pronounced 'd' rather than 'duh'.

Phonics at Wellesley Park



During this phase, the children will also be exposed to common exception words, called 'tricky words' at Wellesley Park. These are words where the graphemes (ways of writing a sound) used to represent the phoneme (sounds) do not match the usual ones. Children will learn to read **I, no, go, to, the**.

Phase 3 – usually taught just before and just after Christmas in Reception

During this phase the children will learn more graphemes, including the remaining letters of the alphabet and some sounds that are made up of 2 or 3 letters (called digraphs and trigraphs). Children will practise blending and segmenting a wider range of CVC words, read more tricky words, spell some tricky words and will begin to read familiar words on sight, rather than decoding them.

Set 6	Set 7	Digraphs	Trigraphs
j v w x	y z,zz qu	ch sh th ng ai ee oa oo ar or ur ow oi er	igh ear air ure

Children will mainly focus on VC and CVC words but with digraphs and trigraphs this means they can be more complicated e.g. **ship, book, sheep, chair, church**.

Children will learn the tricky words (words that can not be sounded out): **he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all**.

Phase 4 – usually taught towards the Summer term in Reception

During this phase the children consolidate everything they have already learned and are also exposed to adjacent consonants (words with 2 consonants phonemes next to each other). Children will learn to read words such as **tent, toast, plum, and spoon**.

Children will also learn the tricky words: **said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out and what**.

Phase 5 – usually taught in Year 1

This phase teaches children a broader range of phonemes and graphemes for use in their reading and spelling. Children will learn that some phonemes can be represented by different graphemes and that they will need to choose the correct grapheme when spelling.

Children will learn the following graphemes for reading:

ay ou ie ea oy ir ue aw wh ph ew oe au



Split digraphs (two letters making one sound, but split by another grapheme) will also be taught: **a_e**
e_e i_e o_e u_e

Children also be exposed to the new tricky words **oh, Mrs, people, Mr, called, looked, could, asked, their.**

Phase 6

When children enter this phase, they should know most of the common phoneme-grapheme correspondences. As a result they should be able to read hundreds of words – reading words on sight, decoding silently or decoding aloud.

This phase focusses on learning spelling rules to support them in being more accurate in their spelling. Children will learn how words change when you add certain letters e.g.

- prefixes at the beginning of words e.g. **re, bi, dis, mis, pre, over, un**
- suffixes on the end of words **-s, -es, -ing, -ed, -er, -est, -y, -en, -ful, -ly, -ment and -ness.**

Phonics fun at home

Try these fun activities to help your child learn to read and spell.

- Sing nursery rhymes - this helps with rhythm, rhyming and vocabulary.
- Play 'Pairs' – turn over a picture and match it to the initial letter sound
- Play 'Robots' – move your arms like a robot as you sound out words for reading
- Play 'I spy'!
 - "I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'b'"
 - "I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'ch'"
 - "I spy with my little eye, something that sounds like c-u-p"
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes together
- Make a junk band with pots and pans
- Share books together, ask your child to join in and reread favourites lots!
- Hide toys under a blanket and tell you child the initial sound of one. Can they guess what it is?
- Play 'Simon Says'
 - "Simon says touch your ch-i-n."
- Share books regularly. Buy new books or visit the library. Reread books as this helps children with learning vocabulary, story structure and expression.
- Listen to your child read lots and be a good reading role model by demonstrating for them.
- Allow your child to see you reading for pleasure – fiction books, non-fiction, newspapers, magazines etc.
- Support your child with practising their reading skills. Encourage blending aloud, as well as in their heads.
- Talk about books. Ask your child what is happening, how the characters are feeling, what do they think will happen next and what do they like about the book?
- Use props and puppets to retell stories and use ambitious vocabulary from books you have read to them.
- Listen to songs and add actions.
- Read rhyming books together. Leave gaps for them to fill in for you and ask them to join in with the repeated refrains.
- Above all, make reading a pleasure and not a chore!

Common exception words

By the end of Year 1, children are expected to be able to confidently read all of these words.

the	was	me	my	friend
a	is	be	here	school
do	his	he	there	put
to	has	me	where	push
today	I	she	love	pull
of	you	we	come	full
said	your	no	some	house
says	they	go	one	our
are	be	so	once	
were	he	by	ask	

By the end of Year 2, children are expected to be able to confidently read all of these words.

door	wild	every	father	improve	many	parents
floor	climb	great	class	sure	clothes	Christmas
poor	most	break	grass	sugar	busy	everybody
because	only	steak	pass	eye	people	even
find	both	pretty	plant	could	water	
kind	old	beautiful	path	should	again	
mind	cold	after	bath	would	half	
behind	gold	fast	hour	who	money	
child	hold	last	move	whole	Mr	
children	told	past	prove	any	Mrs	