

Before beginning the programme children do some preparatory work on print conventions, letter knowledge and whiteboard use. The following table itemises what the children have experience of in nursery.

Competence	Teaching suggestions
Have experience of activities to develop phonological awareness (Phase 1)	<p>To develop children's ability to listen to and identify everyday sounds, we play listening games. We provide sequences of sounds for them to remember and to say the location of a particular sound –</p> <p>e.g. the ringing doorbell was the first sound, the barking dog was the second sound, etc. Developing listening skills leads to an awareness of phonemes and syllables.</p> <p>To focus the children's attention on the structure of words and to develop their familiarity with rhyme and rhythm, we provide opportunities to sing songs, nursery rhymes, jingles, raps with music and movement, and skipping games. We collect objects or pictures that rhyme, asking the children to name each object and talk about the rhymes.</p> <p>To encourage children to focus on alliteration and initial (onset) sounds, we put out objects and pictures and play 'I spy'. Ask the children to think of words beginning with the same sounds – e.g. man, mop, mummy.</p> <p>To develop an awareness that language consists of words and sentences, children play games with spoken sentences of different lengths – e.g. for each sentence, one child comes out to stand at the front for each word. How many children (words) make up the sentence? Can other children generate a new sentence with the same number of words?</p> <p>To help children identify rhythm in words (syllables), we ask them to use their bodies to act out the syllable beats in a word – e.g. by marching or clapping in time. We progress to asking children to tap the number of syllables in their names and other words, such as Sunday, sunshine, teapot, bathtub, tiptoe.</p> <p>To practise oral blending, we segment words into phonemes and then say the whole word. For example, we say to the children, "Tap your h-ea-d, head."</p> <p>To practise oral segmentation, we introduce the children to a puppet who can only understand sound-talk. For example, we ask the puppet what he or she would like to do. The puppet whispers in the teacher's ear, and the teacher repeats "h-o-p", and then says "hop". We ask the children to see if they can speak in puppet-talk and get them to say "h-o-p" to the puppet, who responds by hopping up and down.</p>

Competence

Have experience of the conventions of print and the vocabulary of reading, i.e.:

- left-to-right directionality
- top-to-bottom directionality
- words are made up of letters
- spaces are used between words
- use of lower- and uppercase letters
- punctuation
- positional words (see right)
- illustrations.

Match lower case letters to print (if teaching letter names)

Know about alphabetic order

Be familiar with the interactive screen.

Teaching suggestions

We read stories with the children, pointing out and discussing the conventions of print. We use positional words such as *page, top, bottom, start, beginning, end, first, middle, last, right, left*.

We select the lowercase version of the Magnetic Board and use it to introduce the children to the alphabet. We read the names in order as you point to the letters.

We play the lowercase version of the Alphabet song with voice accompaniment, and as the children become familiar with it over a few days, we encourage them to join in.

We tell the children that they are learning the letter names of the alphabet and point out that each letter of the alphabet is being highlighted as it is sung.

As they become more secure with the Alphabet song we switch to the music-only version, and ask a child to point to the letters as they are sung.

Match uppercase letter names to print (if teaching letter names).

Know that lower- and uppercase letters correspond to each other.

We repeat the procedures above with the uppercase letters.

We discuss with the children the fact that lower- and uppercase letters share the same name. (Later on in the programme, they will find out that they also share the same sound.)

Manipulate items on the screen (if teaching letter names).

We play 'find the letter' games with the children.

We say a letter name and ask the children to drag the corresponding letter from the alphabet panel onto the work area, or to click on the letter to make it appear on the work area.

We switch between lower- and uppercase alphabet options when playing this game.

Have sufficient pencil control to make straight lines and circles with adequate firmness and good posture.

We give the children opportunities to use pencil and paper to draw and write.

