



Language, Literacy and Communication
Fun activities for a Foundation Phase Child



Make activities positive, light hearted and fun.

If you can make learning an active game your child will be more likely to enjoy it and importantly want to repeat it. Learning to communicate, read and write takes a lot of practice and your child will make lots of mistakes whilst they are learning.

Let your child take the lead and engage them by adapting games with things that interest them wherever possible.

- Talk, listen and play with toys on the floor with your child.
- **Sing songs everyday.** Nursery rhymes are especially important for early language development e.g. Humpty Dumpty, Twinkle Twinkle ...
- Make simple shakers with pasta/ rice and empty drink bottles or a tissue box and elastic bands. Play along to your favourite songs. Barefoot books have lots of songs with lyrics to follow on YouTube.
- **Reading traditional fairy tales develops early speech and language skills and later story writing skills e.g. Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Little Red Riding Hood, Three Little Pigs.** Older children will enjoy sharing and making up alternative versions such as 'Three little wolves and the big bad pig'.
- Mystery bag, box or old handbag of everyday objects to talk about together. You could name items, say a sentence about each one, make up a funny story, sound talk short words e.g. h-a-t or write the words/ first sound and match to objects.
- Cardboard boxes, clothes airers and sofa cushions are great for going on an adventure without leaving the house. It could be a magic den, rocket, café, shop...work together and play alongside to develop speech and language skills.
- FaceTime or phone a friend or relative. Can your child speak clearly /recall what they have heard?
- **Go for a walk and talk about what you can see and hear around you e.g. read signs, name objects, spot letters on number plates.**
- Play hunt the sound or tricky words using felt pens and magazines, leaflets or newspapers.
- **Read books to your child every day. Enjoy stories, fact books and poems together. If they enjoy the same book over and over again let them tell it to you or finish your sentences.** Talk about the title, author, pictures, and events or characters in the story to develop their understanding and vocabulary. Many children enjoy books written by Julia Donaldson (Acorn Wood board book series for very young and picture books for older child) these are perfect to read aloud with your child and talk about the detail in the pictures. Some of her books also have catchy songs to go with them which can be found on YouTube.
- If your child has an individual reading book encourage them to read with you everyday.
- **Create a reading den using anything you can find e.g. small tent, cushions, clothes airer and blanket or beanbags. If you can make it dark try reading with a torch or adding fairy lights if supervised.**
- Make writing fun with 'post it' note messages for special toys or characters.
- **Draw letter shapes, child's name or tricky words in a shallow tray of glitter, sand, flour or couscous.**

- Hide letter sounds, high frequency words or tricky words for children to find.
- **Play tea party with favourite toys and write orders, menus and make labels for toys.**
- Developing fine motor skills will help your child's writing development such as, hanging clothes or other objects with pegs on a line.
- **Younger children will enjoy cutting straws and threading penne pasta onto a string. Older children will benefit from using paper clips, a hole punch, split pins or treasury tags with supervision to create models, pictures and secret books.**
- Play treasure hunt games where you write or draw clues for your child to read and find something at the end e.g. a toy/snack in a tin
- **Write a label or sign for their clothes drawers, bedroom door, toy box ...**
- Write a card or postcard for someone in your family that you miss seeing.
- **Play matching games like picture lotto, word and picture matching puzzles, alphabet puzzles and lotto games.**
- Writing starts with drawing so encouraging young children to draw will help their fine motor skills. It does not have to happen sitting down with a pencil. Young children often enjoy 'big writing' on the floor with chalks, felt pens, colour pencils with a roll of old wallpaper, plain side of wrapping paper or outdoors on paving with a brush and water.
- **Make simple books using folded paper with pictures and words. You can make up your own stories up or retell a story you know already.**
- Make an information book or poster about something they are interested in e.g. tv character, vehicle or animal.
- **Follow instructions to bake biscuits together or make something for dinner. Tell someone how you made them. Can you remember each step in order?**
- Let your child see you writing for a purpose and they will often want to join in e.g. a shopping list, birthday cards, present labels, notes or email.
- **Put on a simple puppet show using socks or wooden spoons to make simple puppets.**
- Play 'I spy' games... something beginning with 'ch'.
- **Play musical letters by writing sounds or words your child is learning on separate bits of paper around your room and putting on music to dance to. When the music stops they jump on a letter and say the word or sound.**
- If you have foam bath letter shapes you can play 'what's my word' at bath time or ask children to build a word they know.
- **Go outside if you can to enjoy literacy activities such as, treasure word hunts, writing with chalks or reading secret messages and playing with 'mini small worlds' (detail below)**
- Cut and stick using pictures from catalogues or magazines. Can they write or tell you words/sentence to go with each picture?
- **Use toys you already have to create 'mini small worlds' on a low table top or box e.g. cars and boxes to make a garage, tunnel or ramps...**