

# Phonics



There is **no** equal opportunity if you can't read!

Once a child is able to hear speech sounds and sound patterns, they are now ready to attach the sounds to print. Phonics involves teaching how to connect the sounds of spoken English with letters or groups of letters.

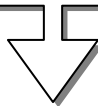
**Example:** The sound /k/ can be represented by *c, k, ck, ch, or q* spellings. Phonics also teaches children to blend the sounds of letters together to produce approximate pronunciations of unknown words. Like phonemic awareness, phonics should be taught in a systematic and sequential order of skills. This page will briefly describe the order. Use this as a guide, but always connect with your child's teacher for a system of instructional practices that will best suit the needs of your child. Although there is a hierarchy of skills, everyone learns differently and only the teacher can truly help you develop a plan for your child.

## 1. Letter Recognition

Letter recognition refers to a child's ability to accurately name all the letters of the alphabet. This is a very important skill. Children need to recognize the letters quickly and with fluency.

**Example:** To be considered fluent, children in kindergarten need to be able to recognize 40 letters in a minute by the end of the school year.

**Important to note:** Parents can help by assuring their child knows all the letters in his or her first and last name by the time they enter Kindergarten.

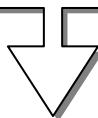


## 2. Short Vowels

**Vowels** - Most people consider the vowels to be A,E,I,O,U. While these letters do represent the vowels, a more accurate description can be "A speech sound made with an open mouth, a sound we can hold and yell".

**Try this:** Make the /ă/ sound as in the word cat. Yell the /ă/ sound, as in the word cat, as loudly as you can. Now yell the /t/ sound as loudly as you can. 😊

**Important to note:** Short vowel sounds are considered closed. Generally speaking, a vowel followed by a consonant is considered short or closed. Consider the word **at**; the letter **a** is closed and makes the /ă/ sound. Use the resources on this page to find materials and activities to teach the short vowel sounds.



## 3. VC and CVC Words

VC and CVC words are simply words that follow the vowel-consonant or vowel-consonant-vowel pattern. The vowel sounds in VC and CVC words are considered closed or short vowels.

**Examples:** at, it, sat, hit,     **Important to note:** This is a critical time in a child's life as a reader. Children are expected to know all the consonants and short vowel sounds. Without this understanding, children will struggle. Please use this web site as a resource to teach VC and CVC words.



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## 4. Diagraphs (beginning and ending)

**Diagraph** – A diagraph is two letters that combine to make one sound. Once they are combined, the letters lose their individual identity.

**Example:** The and That = /th/ notice how the t and the h lose their individual sounds. Some other diagraphs are: ph, sh, ch, wh.....

**Important to note:** When explaining diagraphs to children it's important for them to understand that when the letters are combined they lose their individuality.

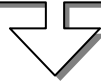


## 5. Magic E

**Magic E** – An e at the end of a word changes the vowel sound from short to long.

**Example:** The word **can** sounds like this; /k/ /ă/ /n/ ---The word **cane** sounds like this; /k/ /ā/ /n/

**Important to note:** At this point children need to understand that vowels can have more than one sound. Children are also introduced to long vowels in teams such as **ai** and **ay**, which make the /ā/ sound. Please use the resources on the web page to help children with **Magic E** and vowel teams



## 6. Blends

**Consonant Blends** – A blend is when two or more letters combine to make one sound. Unlike the diagraph, the new sound is a combination of all the sounds.

**Example: Break-** Notice how the **b** and the **r** can still be heard individually, but combine to make one sound.

**Important to note:** When children segment words with blends, they need to show understanding of the individual sounds in the blend. The blend is not treated as one sound, but two different sounds.



## 7. R/L-Control

**R/L Controlled Vowels-**In words containing a vowel combined with an r or an l, the vowel is neither long nor short; its sound is controlled by the r or the l.

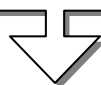
**Example:** car, far, star, fall, ball, install



## 8. Soft / Hard C and G

**C and G-** The sounds for the letters C and G can be different depending on the vowel. The **C** in the word **cat** is said to be hard, it takes on the /K/ sound. The C in the words **cent** is soft; it takes on the /S/ sound. The G in the word **goat** is hard; it takes on the /G/ sound. The G in the word **George** is soft; it takes on the /J/ sound.

**Explanation:** When the letters C or G come before an A, O or U the sound is **hard**. When the letters C or G come before an E, I, or Y the sound is **soft**. Use the web site to learn about Momma C Cat and Granny G!



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## 9. Vowel Teams

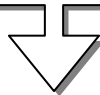
**Vowel Teams** – Two vowels that make one sound. (When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking!) This is a simple way to remember what vowel teams are although there are exceptions!

**Example:** In the words, **team** and **mean**, the **ea** makes the /ē/ sound. In the words, **fail** and **sail**, the **ai** makes the /ā/ sound.



## 10. Books and Online Resources for print

Read, read, read, and read some more!! **There is no equal opportunity if you can't read.** Parents **MUST** take an active role in their child's education. The section on books provides tremendous online resources for reading. Your child's teacher can provide you with print material. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child receives the best education possible. Please play an active role in your child's life. His or her life depends on it!



**Arthur says:** Practice all the skills on the page, email your child's teacher, make an appointment!

Remember:

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