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## **Aims of the film**

We worked together on this film in order to show the important events in early development that create secure foundations of early literacy skills. The phrase 'early literacy' is used to mean the skills and understanding that underpin literacy. The key messages of the film, and this supporting booklet, are that babies and young children should be enabled to take their time. The film shows the span of early childhood from young babies through to children, still young, who are poised to break into a genuine understanding of the world of print. They are close to being ready to be taught how to read and write.

Within the film you will see young learning in action, within the broad age bands of 0-24 months, 20 months to 3.5 years and 3-5 years. The different sections of the film are accompanied by explanations from the commentary by voiceover and excerpts from an interview with Jennie Lindon, chartered psychologist and early years specialist. You will see footage of children in their own homes with their parents and of young children with their key person, and other familiar practitioners, in their nursery. Children need the same kind of approach and experiences wherever they spend their days over early childhood.

Practitioners and parents need to understand what matters within the early years of the road to literacy. That understanding needs to be applied to protecting children's time to learn and ensuring that their experiences are well suited to their age. Young children are not well served if their familiar adults – parents or practitioners - try to speed up the journey to actual reading and writing.

### **Showing what needs to happen before...**

Over early childhood the most useful way to look ahead for actual literacy – being able to read print and write your own – is to think about what needs to happen before it is at all sensible to start formal instruction: teaching children how to read and write.

- What do young children need to be able to do?
- What do they need to understand?
- What do they need to be enthused about?

These questions are woven together through experiences day by day as young children develop their language, intellectual and physical skills.

Young children need to have progressed well in their language development. They will not easily make sense of written language unless they are very confident



in spoken language: talking and listening. This film opens with Seb aged 5.5 years exploring some complicated ideas about crying and how tears work. Seb is keen to talk out how people cry and the source of the tears. He is using figurative language: a means to explain or further describe something in terms of something else. Seb offers, 'It's like a cloud in your eye. But it isn't.'

At the simplest level, words on a page are about spoken language written down. (It is not quite that simple, since written communication is often in a format that is different in some ways from how you would usually say it out loud.) Over early childhood, girls and boys need to build up a generous working vocabulary in their language(s). They need a large number of words that they can use for talking, out of choice, in a meaningful context and that they understand when those words are used in spoken communication with them. They need a sharp ear for the sounds that make up their language(s).

Later literacy also depends on aspects of intellectual development. The whole concept of language rests on understanding symbolism – that one thing can stand for, can represent something else. Spoken words represent objects, actions and ideas. Children extend their active use of symbolic understanding through a growing love of books and within their pretend play. In a picture book, this image of a banana represents the fruit, although it is not possible to eat it, except in pretend. This little figure can be treated like a baby in imaginative play, although the figure is tiny compared with a real baby. Letters and written words are a system of agreed marks that stand for words that you can say. This intellectual understanding links up with a growing knowledge of their social world. Children need to be able to observe the ways that familiar adults, or older children, use their established ability to read and write. Younger children then build a general knowledge of how skills of reading and writing are used within ordinary daily life.

Firm foundations for literacy also depend on physical development. Young children need to be confident in their own body, for deliberate larger movements and coordinating vision and physical movement. They need to be confident in using their hands and fingers for their own deliberate mark making, whether using tools or not. The skill of handwriting depends on children's ability to make deliberate marks and to reproduce those exact marks when they want. Plenty of physical experience and being in tune with their own body helps young children to get a sense of whether they lead with their right hand, their left or a choice that depends on the current task.

Finally young children really need positive attitudes: an enthusiasm for what the written word can do. They need to have stockpiled experience that makes them sure that actual reading and writing will open doors for them as individuals. They look forward to, and talk with eager anticipation about when they will be able to read their own choice of books, write their own stories or messages and not have to ask familiar adults 'what does that say?'



## **What kind of experiences?**

The best experiences for literacy (and numeracy too) over early childhood are led by first hand experiences, many of them through open-ended play opportunities, with generous time to explore, chat, listen and do it again. The most important foundations are created by talking and listening, developing a love of books, enjoying nursery rhymes and songs, generous time for pretend play, story making and telling in all its forms, and plenty of experiences for deliberate mark making, painting and drawing.

Happy, relaxed experiences for babies and young children will contribute to the skills and understanding which will set them up perfectly for later learning to read and write. However, it is important to ensure that childhood continues to belong to the children. It is valuable to know how and why these experiences prepare children so well. Yet adults need to relax and enjoy children's early years as well. You should not be forever thinking 'what will this experience deliver?'

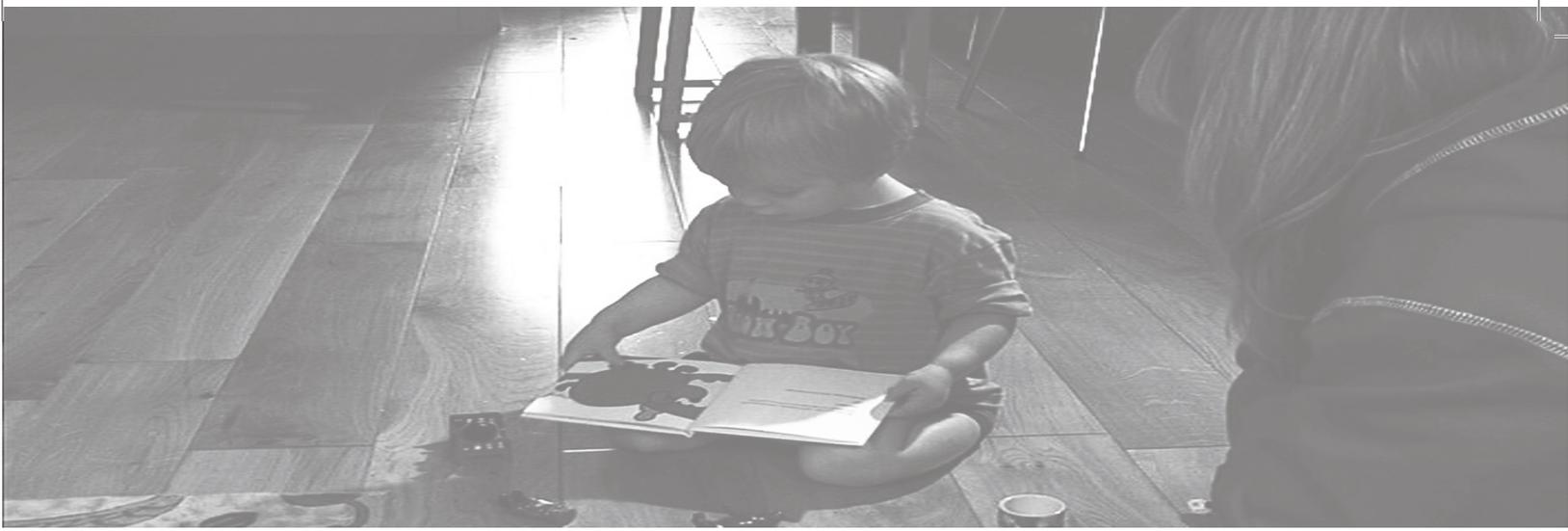
Yes, making time for proper conversations is one of the building blocks for early literacy. But you do not have conversations with children, snuggle up to enjoy a book or get stuck in with the large scale painting exclusively because of the later payoff for learning. You make time and space because these experiences are really enjoyable now. They are the right kind of experiences to give to children and they will be the sources of happy memories for children themselves.

It is also crucial to realise that what helps young children is often very straightforward. The most important item of equipment is an interested adult who knows this child well and has a lasting relationship with him or her. That adult will be a young child's mother or father within the family or, in out of home care, children's familiar practitioner in nursery or their childminder. As you will see in the film, valuable experiences for early literacy skills do not always need resources in addition to you (the essential human resource). Helpful, other resources are often simple, sometimes free and, when bought, not that expensive.

## **Using the film**

The film is organised so that it can be used in a flexible way. It is possible to watch the whole film, or to stop for personal thought or discussion with other people between the sections. These notes support any of the following ways of extending adult understanding of early literacy skills:

- Tutors working with students on early child care and education courses or foundation degrees;
- Trainers with a group of practitioners attending a training day or workshop;
- In-house continued professional development led by the team leader or a consultant;
- Network meetings for childminders, for foster carers or anyone involved



- professionally with young children;
- Communication with parents and other family carers through open sessions organised by a nursery, centre or pre-school, support groups or parent workshops.
- Personal viewing and reflection by individuals from any of the above groups who wish to extend their own understanding or continued professional development.

## **Timings of the film**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2 minutes</b>
<b>From the beginning: Birth to 24 months</b>	<b>13 minutes</b>
<b>Moving on: 20 months to 3.5 years</b>	<b>19 minutes</b>
<b>Getting there: 3 to 5 years</b>	<b>19 minutes</b>



# From the beginning

## 0-24 months

Laying firm foundations for literacy starts from the very beginning with babies, because enthusiasm for communication starts within those early weeks and months. Over the first year of life, babies can become keen on books, songs and nursery rhymes. Older babies show you that, as young as they are, they have developed a sharp ear for the sounds of their language. Over that second year of life very young boys and girls make the intellectual leap into pretend play. At the simplest level they are beginning to weave their own stories, making the link between experience of how their daily life works and weaving that knowledge back into their imaginative play. You can see all these exciting developments through the excerpts in this section.

Charlotte (3 months) has a conversation with her Dad as he changes her nappy. Charlotte has already learned about the turn taking of communication and happily adds her sound making and gurgles. Her Dad treats Charlotte as a full partner in this conversation and follows her lead sometimes. He talks to his baby daughter in the more expressive, circling form of talking known as infant directed speech. This excerpt shows how pauses and repetitions are so effective in keeping Charlotte's attention. It is also an important reminder that Dads are just as able to adjust their communication in this way for babies.

Charlotte and her Mum have an equally enjoyable exchange led by Mum's use of infant directed speech. The 'conversation' moves seamlessly into Mum delighting Charlotte with the rhyme 'Round and round the garden'. Orson (aged 7.5 months) enjoys a singing time with his Mum, which is extra special because he is bounced on Mum's leg. Orson is now able to indicate that he would like the song and the bounce again. Wherever babies and toddlers spend their days, they need plenty of personal attention. Good nursery practice is home-like, with practitioners, as you see in the film, being very attentive to individual babies and toddlers. Young children need familiar adults who are ready to sing a song and snuggle up with a book on request. Familiar practitioners respond to young children, who start the communication. But young children make these overtures to adults who are swift to react and to start a simple turn taking game like putting a hand in front of your own face and going 'boo' when you remove it.

Orson, at 10.5 months, and Mum look at a book together and Orson shows he is engaged as he listens, looks closely and touches the book. His Mum is quick to comment about what has caught Orson's interest. She is able to follow up in the



detailed way because Mum is alert to what Orson looks at on the page and what he touches or half points towards in the book. She also comments to help him make connections between the book and the familiar routines of his day, like the pictures of bathtime.

Orson, now aged 12 months, is holding forth with an energetic monologue at the meal table, with Mum, and Dad just out of sight. Orson's expressive language now has the flow of speech, he varies his sounds deliberately and uses gestures for extra emphasis. Maybe there is a real word or two in the flow, maybe not, but soon his family will recognise actual words that Orson uses with meaning. Very young children like Orson develop this rich expressive communication because their familiar adults have offered them the give-and-take of a real conversation - long before the baby's contribution is of recognisable words. The other important feature is that the adult sometimes follows the baby's lead and imitates his or her sound making, as with Charlotte and her Dad. This larking about with language is an enjoyable shared activity that should not stop once this baby becomes a talking toddler.

In the nursery children enjoy the same kind of personal attention and genuine interest from a familiar adult. Jaleel, aged 16 months, is 'talking' on the phone – an indication also that he has moved into using everyday resources for pretend play. He brings the phone over to Stephen, the practitioner, who immediately responds and pretends to talk into the phone as well. In the next sequence, Orson, aged 14 months, is busy 'feeding' his doll with little bits of paper. His pretend play rests on imagining that the paper is food and his doll can be treated as if she is a real baby.

Pretend play is often brief and relatively simple in this second year of life. But the development is important for the build-up of early literacy skills for two reasons. It is an indication that young children understand representation or symbolism, that one thing can stand for another, in these examples a doll for a real baby and a pretend phone for a real one. The other positive sign for supporting early literacy skills is that young children start to create stories through their pretend play.

It is also noticeable that neither Orson's doll nor Jaleel's phone are battery-operated. Both of these young children are busy making the sounds or words that are needed for their pretend play. It is highly likely that, if these play resources were more high-tech, then Orson and Jaleel would spend energy pressing buttons to make the pre-programmed sounds or phrases. In contrast, here both young children are busy in leaps of imagination and using their own expressive language.

Leila, 16 months, is interested in different kinds of reading matter and wants to look at her Mum's magazine. Leila is now able to ask questions – 'What dat?' - making links between what is on the page of this magazine and real life. She makes the direct connection between the nose of the woman on the page, Leila's own nose and that of her sister, Jamie. Leila's Mum is following her daughter's lead and replying to



the questions she wants to have answered right now. Orson, still only 18 months of age, has already learned that books can also tell you about the world. He enjoys a book about birds and directs his Dad for information by pointing to the different pictures. Orson has made that leap of understanding that pictures stand for the real thing, in this case different kinds of birds. He has also developed an enthusiasm for non-fiction – information books – as well as fiction – story books.

Familiar adults help by respecting the flow of what young children want to explore today. Orson's Dad picks up, in a natural way, on his young son's current confusion about 'flower' and 'fire'. With Dad's help, you can see that Orson is listening carefully and has probably now grasped the difference between 'flower' which is an image on the jigsaw he is doing with Dad and 'fire' which Orson points to across the room: to the actual fire behind the guard. Orson listens carefully and repeats – out of choice – some of what his Dad says, such as the word 'together' when two pieces of the simple jigsaw are fitted to make a picture. But also Dad repeats some of what Orson has just said and you can hear this valuable echo in several of their conversational times in this film.

Maddi, aged just 2 years, and her Dad enjoy a book together and Maddi is able to use her speech to name items, but also to indicate what she may want to know. Her Dad's questions are linked with what he and his daughter are looking at together. Maddi, like Orson, repeats, almost echoes, the words that her Dad has provided for her in this meaningful context. Dad actively recognises that some pictures are not that clear: what Maddi thinks are eggs are in fact plums.

Young children need to build a strong basis of rich oral communication, because they need to be very familiar with the sounds of their language. Children need to be able to talk spontaneously and express themselves. They need to be able to listen and understand what is said to them. Unlike reading and writing, babies and young children do not need formal instruction in talking and listening. Children only need a special language programme if something has gone awry: either their development has been affected by disability or familiar adults have provided very limited communication.

In this section of the film you can see very young girls and boys simply getting on with this learning task in a relaxed way with adults who know them well and care very much about them as individuals. From the earliest months of babyhood, men – as fathers or early years practitioners – are equally able as women to provide these rich experiences of communication. Young boys especially need familiar male role models who are able to show, within ordinary exchanges throughout early childhood, that grown-up men definitely do books, reading and writing.



## Moving on

### 20 months to 3.5 years

Young children need to build up their muscle strength for large and fine physical skills and movements. They need plenty of time to explore how to make deliberate marks – and to create their own marks again and again, with different tools and with a variety of materials. In this section of the film you can watch young children, aged between 16 months and 2 years, in their nursery who are fully absorbed making deliberate marks in soft sand. Their familiar adult, Steven, shows his genuine interest in what the children choose to do. Far from being irritated by the inevitable sand on the floor, he takes full advantage of this event to explore writing with his finger in the sand and making footprints. Young children use their hands, fingers and tools to make a wide range of marks and this playful experience enables them to understand how they can, if they choose, deliberately recreate a mark or try something similar but not identical.

Orson, aged 20 months, makes deliberate marks with marker pens and - should there be any issues about safety - Dad is right by his side. Orson is able to talk about what he is doing and the experience is that much more special because Dad copies Orson as well as Orson copying Dad. At 2.5 years Orson is able to operate a finer tool, like the pencil. He is able to talk out loud and he is clear that it is his 'drawing'. Orson is able to comment on precisely what his hands are creating: 'it's got a long tail', 'It's got swish here' and 'swishy, swishy long tail'.

Young children need time to work out which hand feels better to lead their mark making. These young children are getting plenty of happy and absorbed practice that will enable them, in due course, to decide whether they are right or left-handed, or genuinely flexible for different tasks. The majority of the world is right handed, so children who emerge as left handed benefit from some special materials, for instance from the organisation Anything Left-Handed, full details in the Resources section.

At age 2.5 years Orson's pretend play is more complex and he moves easily between his imaginative scenario with the little figures to fetching the book he needs since the fireman is going to bed. Orson is well able to talk about the book he has chosen for the fireman's bedtime story and to stroke the textured picture of a dog. Then he easily switches back to the pretend bedtime routine that he is organising for the little fireman figure until it is, 'Night night, fireman'.



Orson's language is well developed because he has many conversations within his family and those experiences follow his interests. Orson, aged 2.5 years, is outdoors with his Dad, off to find 'Orson's spider' but the expedition evolves into a thorough search for creepy crawlies. Together they look really carefully and Dad provides the words which Orson may not know yet. Orson repeats words and phrases, like 'slimy slug', yet they are all in a meaningful context, which ensures that soon they will be part of his own vocabulary. Orson's parents have paid him attention in the best possible ways, suited to his age and understanding and they have not tried to fast-track his development. These exciting events are within normal range; Orson's abilities will only seem unusual if adults – practitioners or parents – have lost sight of what is possible.

Babies are very responsive to music, rhythm and tuneful communication. Parents around the world sing to their babies and children, because very young children light up with the rhythm and repetition of simple songs. Young children who enjoy singing and rhymes will have practised, in a most enjoyable way, the sounds of their own language(s). By 2.5 years Orson has had plenty of experience of nursery rhymes and Incy Wincy is his favourite. The happy repetition, supported by the regular hand movements of the rhyme, give plenty of practice in saying the words and sharpening the ability to hear similar sounds, like the rhyming ends of some words that come close together – spout and out, rain and again.

Young children in nursery should have the same kind of personal attention and opportunities to learn their own favourite rhymes. Perhaps there will, in nursery, be times when a small number of children enjoy songs and rhymes together. But there should also be plenty of times, as you see in the film, when a familiar adult is easily available for a child. Laura, the practitioner, is snuggled up with one young child, very similar in age to Orson, who is enjoying Incy Wincy by singing and connecting that rhyme to the book on their lap.

Orson, aged 2.5 years, and his Dad spend a fascinating time watching the refuse collectors. Orson is completely safe; he is with Dad, who is also helping him to make sense of what is happening. Orson has learned more about how life works - in this instance about the sequence of how the refuse collectors operate. Such experiences are the raw materials of conversations that children often want to have with someone a short while later – about what they have seen recently. A great deal of imaginative play builds narratives and roles from what children have seen in daily life and talked about with familiar adults. Orson will not necessarily play later about collecting rubbish. But it is exactly this kind of ordinary experience that young children do then rework in their pretend play.

Ava, aged 2.5 years, shows that she already understands a great deal about writing and the reasons why adults would use this skill. She wants to have a go at creating the shopping list that she and Mum will use later for a real shopping trip. Ava imitates Mum's words of 'I better write it' in order to make it clear that she, Ava, wants to have the pencil and paper. Having made her list, Ava wants her Mum to 'do the rest' from Ava's meaningful marks. But Ava also understands the concept of representing names on paper; she asks her Mum to 'write you' and 'write Mummy and write Ava'.



Ava's understanding of the concept of a list and the usefulness of writing is further extended because she and Mum go shopping together. In the supermarket, Ava is able to find the cereal that she wanted to have on the list. Not yet 3 years of age, Ava already understands a great deal about written symbols and can confidently identify the Coco Pops by recognising the whole packet.

Also at the age of 2.5 years, Ava enjoys a book that she has chosen herself, showing how much she now understands about how the telling of the story unfolds page by page. Ava is able to recount the tale from the book to herself but she also has a thorough understanding of making as well as telling stories. Ava is able to recount her own story to Mum about how Frog had fallen over. She has the raw materials for being able to talk through a narrative.

Seb, at almost 3 years of age, has the understanding and the language to talk in detail with his Mum about pretend play that happened in the past. Mum helps Seb with the recall but he only needs hints; Mum is not doing all the memory or talking work. Seb has a creative option in words, 'eye keeper', when he cannot recall that pirates may wear an eye patch. He then goes back over a personal narrative of what may have happened to his eye patch, when he last played pirates, who with, and his character of Captain Hook.

Keen talkers, even under-3s, are able to put their thoughts into words. When children are ready to learn, writing is not only about the technicalities of handwriting. School age children need to be able to talk out and plan what they want to write. Keen talkers also learn different uses of language, which in time will be reflected in their communication through writing. Older 2s and young 3-year-olds use their spoken language to inform and explain, to tell about an event in the recent past, to remind adults about 'what you said we'd do today'. A broad use of spoken language will later support good reasons why children might want to write something down, for instance to capture a written record of an event or to make sure something important is not forgotten.

You can see in the sequences how what helps young children is often very straightforward. Valuable experiences for early literacy skills do not always need resources in addition to you, an interested adult. 'Keep it simple' is a good message, along with the fact that the best voices to use are your own (yours and that of the baby or child). You do not need the voices of total strangers captured inside a plastic toy or electronic console and powered by batteries.

However, children become increasingly important to each other, as friends whose shared play is built by time together in their own home and a predictable pattern to the week that means children really get to know each other well at nursery, pre-school or playgroup. Older 2s and young 3s will start to have their own detailed conversations when, like Seb (3 years) and Jamie (3.8), each child has gained communication skills from their earliest experiences. Seb and Jamie talk a little about the Easter egg but soon get on to the more exciting topic of Seb's blood blister and how he managed to get this minor injury.



# Getting there

## 3 to 5 years

Young children need to build up their confidence with large and fine physical skills and movements. When children are genuinely ready to learn how to write, then they will need the focussed physical skills that enable them to hold and control a fine tool like a pencil and to lift it off and onto the page. However, those fine physical skills are supported with happy practice within a wide range of freely chosen play activities. Fine physical skills depend upon young children's confidence in their own bodies and their ability to make large, as well as small scale, physical movements, to fine-tune their vision and co-ordination.

In this section Niaz, aged 3 years of age, with other children in his nursery, is able to practise his physical skills in different ways. He is busy manipulating the clay with fine movements of his fingers as well as with a tool. But Niaz also has plenty of opportunities for drawing in his nursery and generous time outside. In the film you will see Niaz using large scale movements on the climbing wall in the nursery garden and balancing along the bars. In fact these are the bold deeds of a hero: Niaz is busy re-enacting the rescue of a princess, a story that has enthused the children earlier in the day.

Young children in this nursery are busy talking together, at one point about little figures and pictures. Later Niaz is enthusiastic about pretend shopping and has purchased a basket of goods from the shop run by two girls. Niaz has expressed an interest in food for his breakfast and Nadine, his early years practitioner, supports Niaz and other children to extend their play. Pencils and paper are easily available and they start to create personal shopping lists, led by drawing what they would all like to have for their breakfast. This impromptu group grows a little, but remains small enough that so Nadine can easily share her attention between the children.

Young children with an enthusiasm for books also learn a very great deal about the art of story telling. Good early years practice is to keep the groups small and to be responsive to young children's requests for a story. In the film you can see a practitioner and two children, snuggled up really close out of choice. The practitioner is able to share Postman Pete with two children, yet also respond to the third child close to them, who has chosen his own book about sheep.

Seb, aged 3.5 years, enjoys the details of the book 'In The Night Kitchen' with his mother. But Seb is also learning about the structure of stories, about beginning, middles and ends, about twists and turns and characters, about description of



events and dialogue, what the characters actually say. Out of choice, Seb re-runs the story through his pretend play, with his play dough and his own baking oven made out of a cardboard box.

When young children have had plenty of experience of songs and rhymes, they start to make up their own. Ava, at just 3 years of age, encourages her friend, Esther, also 3 years, and Mum to join a song that Ava has created. Ava understands how a song should work, the repetitive nature of different lines in the song and the fact that you usually have movements that accompany the different lines as they are sung. She is able to use her spoken language in a deliberate and playful way and has a sharp ear for rhythm and flow. It is very endearing to listen and watch as young children make up their own songs and tuneful ditties. It is also worth standing back and admiring how much they have learned in order to create in this way.

Sumaya, aged 3.5 years, is adept at talking out loud for her story making. Sumaya is speaking in her family language of Arabic. Like many young children across the UK, Sumaya is tackling more than one language within her early childhood. Young children's brains are programmed ideally for learning language. Being bilingual or multilingual only seems to be unusual, or an inevitable problem, to adults who grew up monolingual. However, children like Sumaya are very busy learning vocabulary from more than one language. Sumaya will also soon be aware, if not already, that her family language is written in a completely different way from English. Her early years practitioners need to be fully aware of the learning task for Sumaya, and other children who are or are becoming bilingual.

As well as respect for her 3-year-old fluency in Arabic, Sumaya will benefit from friendly attention to help her extend her English vocabulary. However, Sumaya is not a baby or toddler; she is talking and thinking like a 3-year-old. So any conversation, and making clear links between words and their meaning, needs to be closely connected with her likely understanding and interests. Of course, if you do not speak a child's home language, then you cannot make an informed judgement whether she or he is speaking and listening up to their age. You certainly must not judge their language ability exclusively by English, especially if children have not long started to take this language on board. It will be important to get a reliable idea of a child's ability in their home language. If parents are bilingual, then you will be able to have a conversation with them. If not, there will be very good reason to find a bilingual practitioner, even if not from your own setting, who can give you a more accurate view. That practitioner should also explain to the child's parents why you have asked for some help in this way.

At home, Jamie (4.5 years) is active in talking out her story about the dolls, how they are going to bed at night but need to be locked safely in the cage. Jamie shows how familiarity with fairy stories and the structure of this kind of tale enables children to imagine their own plots. Early literacy is supported whenever children are



keen to weave stories: talking out loud, creating plots and characters. When young children's mark making moves towards letter-like shapes, stories are sometimes what they most want to 'write'. Children who have created lots of narratives through play are adept at planning their story.

In her nursery Tope has equivalent relaxed time to create the narrative around the pretend office which she has established with her friend. (The girls are 3.5 and 4 years of age.) Tope shows her grasp of the usefulness of writing and, through her pretend play, how she understands why you might want to write. Tope and her companion in the pretend office look like writers and they will have gained a broad understanding of why people write something. 4 and 5 year olds should have plenty of relaxed experiences, such as you see following Tope's play in the film, that enable them to fine tune their skills and understanding so that they will become poised to be taught how to write, as well as to read.



## **The onward literacy journey for children**

### **Confident literacy is the final aim**

There is a great deal of worry in the UK about older children and adolescents who have not learned secure literacy skills during their time in primary and then secondary school. We should worry; life is hard for adults who cannot read and write, or whose abilities are shaky. It is shocking that some adolescents have spent a significant number of hours in school. Yet they cannot read and write to a competent level – and there is no additional explanation such as dyslexia which complicates the learning task.

It is unacceptable that young people should emerge illiterate from their statutory education. However, it is also worrying when older children and adolescents are able to read, or write, yet have limited motivation to use their skills - unless an adult is standing over them. These young people have not developed positive attitudes about reading and writing as skills that are of personal value to them. In contrast, they have gained the negative outlook that reading and writing is something they have to do. As soon as the grown-ups stop nagging, these tedious obligations can be abandoned.

We want older children in their primary school years to be well on the road to being competent readers and writers. A proportion of these children will also be achieving this task in one or more home language(s) that are not English. We want adolescents to be fully literate: able to read easily and widely, able to plan, write (and type), use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. We want them to read for their own interests as well as for study and to use their writing skills for all the different reasons that the written word is the most appropriate form of communication.

### **Secure foundations from early childhood**

Later problems are not resolved by taking adult anxiety right down the age range, along with a misunderstanding of how best to build firm foundations of understanding and strong motivation within early childhood. Those foundations will be unsafe



if adults, however well-meaning, try to make young children learn to read and write before they have built a basis of enough, and the right kind of, early literacy experiences.

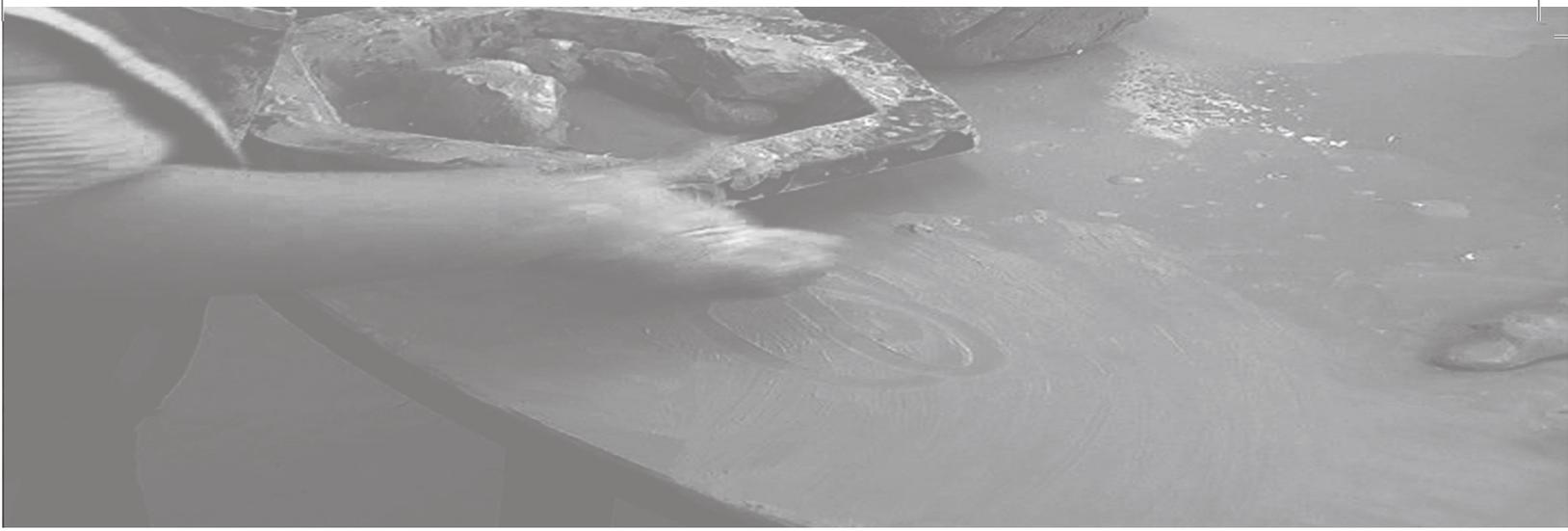
Early years practitioners, with parents, can keep alert for when children are genuinely ready to learn to read and write. Some of the signs are:

- Reading – they recognise some words and letters and logos from the high street. They understand a great deal about how books work and look as if they are reading a familiar story. They want to know ‘what does that say?’
- Writing – their meaningful mark making has evolved into emergent writing. Their marks flow like writing, there are a few recognisable letters within their creation. They tell you what their marks ‘say’.

When children are ready, then they do need to be taught reading and writing. They need formal instruction for understanding and decoding the written form of their language(s). The ability to read and write, especially for a language as complex as English, does not simply appear. Reading and linguistic specialists agree that a systematic and structured approach to phonics is necessary. There is no reliable evidence to point exclusively to a specific form of phonics. However, this approach needs to be supported by other strategies that will make sense to children who have a good grasp of the sounds of their spoken language and a firm understanding of how written materials like books tend to work. But the key point is ‘when they are ready’ and, for most children, that will not be until after they are 5 years old.

Over early childhood, girls and boys move from meaningful mark making towards emergent writing: the flow of deliberate marks that look more and more like writing. There is a useful parallel here with spoken communication. Older babies and very young toddlers develop a flow of spoken communication that sounds more and more like actual speech. You may strain your ear to hear, thinking there must be some actual words in there, and soon there are. Baby and toddler tuneful babbling becomes closer to speech and the recognisable words start to take up more space in the babbling than the tuneful sounds. Penny Tassoni (2008) points out the importance of respecting emergent writing just as much as that early babbling. It would be a very thoughtless adult who criticised a babbling baby for not talking properly. It is equally important to respect those early stages towards written communication. There is nothing inherently wrong with the word ‘scribbling’, but unfortunately it too often has ‘only’ or ‘just’ put in front. Children’s emergent writing (scribbling) must not be greeted with disappointment that it is ‘not proper writing’ or that they ‘should stop scribbling’.

- So long as they have plenty of appropriate experiences, 4 and 5 year olds can distinguish between what they tell you is ‘my drawing’ and ‘my writing’.
- The latter will increasingly look rather like writing. It will have a wave like flow



over the page, or chalked on the ground. In the case of familiarity with English, this child's flow (that they say is writing) will start to go from left to right: she or he will start to look like a writer.

- The deliberate marks start to have spaces between them, in the same way that this child has observed that writing has gaps.
- Some of the marks start to look like letters and the child may tell you that a particular mark is a letter, which they will probably pronounce by the sound and maybe tell you is 'my letter' ('b' for Ben).
- Word and word-like clusters start to appear and soon these are recognisable words that this child has deliberately written.
- The writing emerges fully from the flow of meaningful marks and the child can write a message or a short sentence, currently with a good try at letters and creative spelling. You can find a visual explanation of the above in Anne Hughes and Sue Ellis (1998) – see the Resources section.

## **Positive attitudes: what can writing and reading do for me?**

Over early childhood young girls and boys need to learn about the practical uses of the skills of reading and writing. By the time they are 5 and 6 years of age, they should have a long list of worthwhile, personal answers to the question of, 'What can reading (or writing) do for me?' Enjoyable and appropriate experiences build up when children are welcomed into ordinary domestic routines and they can easily observe adults using their own skills.

Young children learn a great deal through play, but they do not only learn through what adults would classify as play. They find out about the value of reading and writing from:

- Making shopping lists with you, and they will happily switch from marks to drawings to create a list that satisfies them. Ava at 2.5 years understands the concept of a list, keen to have a go and happy to ask her mother to finish it.
- Making notices with your help to tell people that this castle is 'a work in progress' or 'please do not move' a special display of stones and leaves.
- Making reminder notes of their own or telling you 'you mustn't forget'.
- Taking written messages between rooms in a nursery.
- Being part of the process of letters or newsheets that will go home with their parent. Children will know there is a special place for these letters, maybe a peg board when there are quite a few families.
- Creating a recipe sheet for favourite meals and variations on a basic recipe.



- Writing down the instructions for 'how we made...'; when the construction was an original idea and the children know they might want to do it again in the future. This kind of writing is often accompanied by a photo or drawing.
- Being out and about with you: recognising road signs, the front of buses and logos on shops. There is always print in your neighbourhood – what Cathy Nutbrown (1996) calls environmental print.
- Recognising specific packets in the supermarket or in the kitchen.

Adults are an essential walking visual model of a reader and writer. Children will hear and see you reading from books. But do they see you reading for other purposes – perhaps you need to make it obvious, by saying, 'Let me just check the instructions'. If children see you writing for many different reasons, then they build their view of what writing can do, such as:

- Help you to remember something important.
- Enable you to communicate with someone who is not in front of you.
- Capture good ideas from the children, as they share 'what we could do about...'
- Save important memories, as in a diary or the personal story of 'how we watched the baby ducks grow up'.
- As well as capturing original stories that the children create.

## What you need to do

- Let children see you reading for a purpose: checking a reminder list, reading out the written instructions alongside the illustrations in a recipe book, used with young children for simple cooking.
- Spot the meaningful print in your neighbourhood, when you are out on local trips: the name of a road or a shop, the destination on the front of a bus, directions for pedestrians as well as for cars.
- Find out the meaning, with the children, of written notices in a language you do not understand – ask the shopkeeper about a packet when you go shopping or someone outside a place of worship.
- If you know your own spelling (or punctuation) needs some attention, then do some work on those skills.
- It is not only alright, it is very useful for children to see and hear you check your spelling. Let them see you look closely at something you have written. You maybe say, 'There's something wrong with that word' or 'I don't think I've spelled that right'. Check your spelling with a dictionary.



## What you need to avoid

- Leaving children out of possible emergent writing or local print spotting, because a task is quicker if you do it alone. Speed is far less important than using these opportunities.
- Making any aspect of literacy sound boring or troublesome. Never say dismissive comments like, 'I've never been any good at spelling' or 'it doesn't matter' – yes it does!
- Thinking the spell checker on a word processor will do all the work for you. It can only judge that a word is spelled correctly; it does not know if that is the right word for this sentence.

## Home and Nursery

Babies and children need the same kind of early experiences wherever they spend their days. The best nurseries are home-like and childminders should definitely not feel they have to turn their home into something like a classroom. Early years practitioners should be offering the same kind of early literacy experiences that work within a family home.

- In a nursery or other group provisions, the key person system should ensure that babies, toddlers and young children get plenty of personal attention, chatting and genuine adult interest in their chosen play.
- Conversations and enjoyment of books should still happen in personal exchanges and very small groups. It is possible to follow children's interests when good early years practice is followed. Planning is light and focuses on opportunities.
- Experiences or activities, that adults have pre-planned to an extent, are offered as possibilities. There is plenty of time for children to choose and organise their own play and adults come alongside as playful companions. Generous supplies of stationery and mark making materials enable children to use their skills wherever the play takes them.

Nurseries (and the English reception class) are part of young children's early years provision; they are not school and the environment should not look like a formal classroom. There may be resources in a nursery that are unlikely to be in a family home. Perhaps there is a whole area that becomes the children's 'artists studio', dedicated to painting and craft work. Maybe an entire corner can become a travel agency or well equipped domestic play area. Young children relish these kind of opportunities; they are the source of happy memories of 'when I was in my nursery'. But what young children do with these opportunities is very similar to their use of a roll of wallpaper in the garden at home or making a pretend cooker indoors from a large cardboard box.



## **Why English is so difficult**

Whatever language(s) they are learning, young girls and boys need to have learned steadily many reasons for them to want to learn to read and write, when they are developmentally ready. It is a tough task to learn to decipher the written word in reading and to form correct handwriting and spelling. When children are ready to tackle reading in any language, they have to learn how the system of sounds in the spoken word is written down in terms of symbols: letters or other forms of writing. However, building firm foundations for literacy, and not rushing this experience, is really important when the language is English.

## **A rich and complex language**

English is a very rich language, with historical roots in many other languages. However, the consequence is that it is a highly non-regular language. In terms of world languages, English is exceptionally inconsistent in terms of how spoken sounds from different words are transcribed by written letters from the alphabet. Some reading and linguistic specialists describe English as the most inconsistent world language in terms of the rules. This fact will not be obvious to you if English is your only language, or your only reasonably fluent language. Some cross-national studies report data that children in the UK learn to read and write later than some of their European peers. Misreporting of such studies fuels claims that the teaching methods are wrong and sometimes that everything would be fine if only everyone would use this one method. Panic leads to claims that it is therefore crucial to start children even younger on formal instruction.

Informed writers (Usha Goswami, 2003 or Carol Togerson et al, 2006) point out that there is nothing the matter with children in the UK and there is no magic method formula. The bottom line is that English-speaking children have a much harder task to learn to read and write. Cross-national studies have also shown up higher rates of dyslexia for English children, young people and adults. Again, the reason is that English is so difficult. Children, who would have struggled more than their peers to decode written language anywhere in the world, have much higher hurdles to overcome with English.

It is ironic that English speakers have written a significant proportion of the academic and technical papers about teaching children how to read and write. There is good reason to suppose that what works well for English is not the best way for other languages. At the very least, the best literacy approach for English is a combination of methods; there is good evidence that no single method can do the job alone.



## The basics to remember

So, it is important to lay out the basics, as part of the rationale for why young children must not be rushed. Take your time with the following.

English is represented in print by means of an alphabet with a total of 26 letters. The language is written in a horizontal direction, starting from the left and moving across to the right. There are world languages that follow none of these patterns, because they are not universal. Some children, who are learning English in nursery or with their childminder, are also learning family language(s) at home that are written in a completely different way from English. Not all languages are alphabetic, by any means, some use other systems of symbols and characters.

Spoken English is composed of many sounds. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word that can change the meaning, if you say that sound differently. If you put 'w' in front of 'ig' you have a different word and different meaning from 'dig'. If you put 'a' in the middle of 'w' and 'g' you get 'wag' – different again.

It is generally agreed that English has 44 phonemes, although it is possible to find estimates that vary from closer to 40 and up to 46. Different accents and dialects of English vary in some of the patterns. So the same word may be said (pronounced) differently depending on the person's accent. The word is, however, spelled by letters in the same way when written, regardless of how it is pronounced.

A phoneme has to be represented in written language by a grapheme: a single letter or group of letters that symbolises this sound on paper. In discussion about reading and writing, phonemes are usually written like this /sh/-/i/-/p/. There will always be the same number of graphemes in a word as there are phonemes. So the word 'ship' has 3 of each.

But bear in mind that some phonemes are single sound-letter links like

- The letter 'p' for the sound at the end of 'ship'.

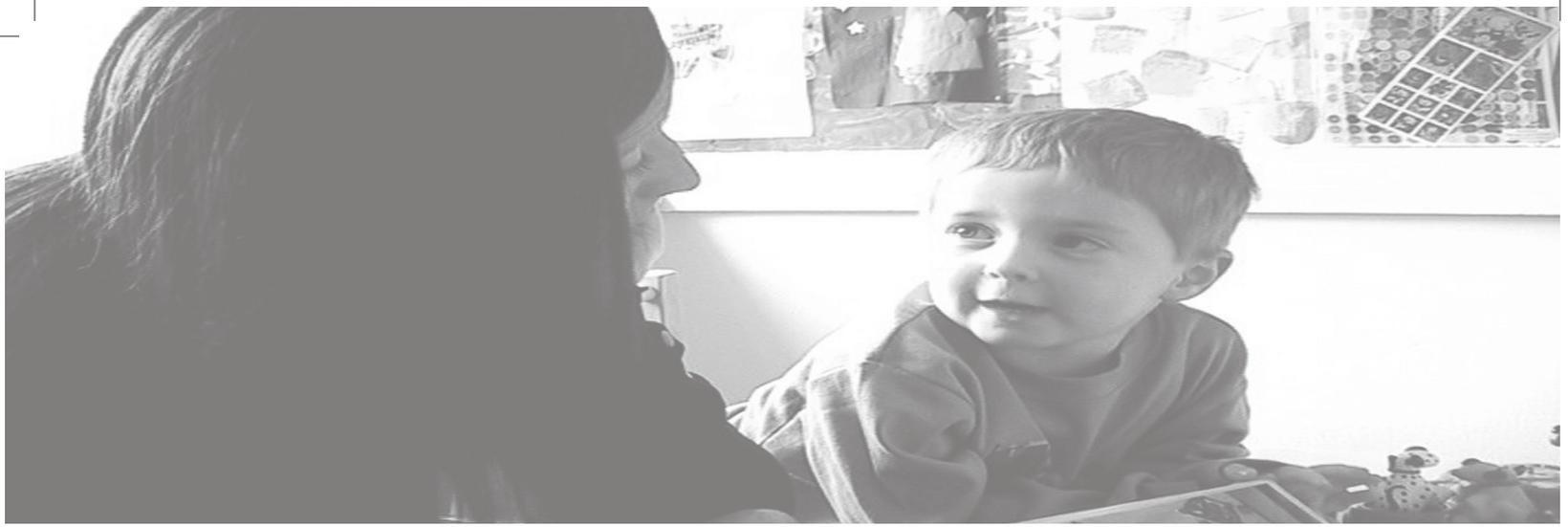
But other phonemes are combination sounds like

- The 'sh' at the beginning of 'ship' and require a 2-letter grapheme.

A grapheme can be as many as 3 or 4 letters.

The complication in English is that one letter or letter cluster (grapheme) in a written word is frequently pronounced in a different way in different words.

- Say 'church' and then 'chemist', focussing on that first sound. Can you hear the different sound for the 'ch' beginning of each word?



The same sound (phoneme) is written by different letters in different words.

- Say 'Bert', 'hurt' and 'dirt' focussing on that second letter each time. Can you see the different letter for the same sound in each word?

And all of this variation happens when it is the same person speaking, not different individuals, whose accent varies for spoken English.

In a nutshell, learning to read and write English words is a serious challenge. For just about every rule you learn about spelling, there will be one or more words that are the exception. There are some words, like 'yacht', that just have to be learned, because they do not share rules with any other words. Languages like Welsh or Polish look complicated to non-speakers. However, the structure of both languages is much more straightforward than English. Once you have learned which letters (graphemes) are written to represent which sounds (phonemes) in Welsh or in Polish, then the rule usually works every time.

## **Realistic expectations & appropriate help**

Across Europe, the UK stands out as one of the few places where 4 and 5 year olds are treated as being ready for formal school instruction, including reading and writing. There are admirable attempts across the UK to reverse this trend but the pressure is significant. However, those children in other European countries, who are not expected to start on actual reading and writing until 6 or 7 years of age, are usually learning a language that is considerably less complex than English.

Young English-speaking children need more time, not less, than their European peers, to build up their skills and understanding. Children do need to be taught to read and write; these skills do not simply emerge without any structured help. But the key question is when should that specific teaching begin, especially if the language is English? The answer is certainly not before they are 5 years old and many 5s are still on the learning journey towards that point when they will be ready for formal instruction.

In summary 'early literacy' refers to the skills and understanding that underpin literacy. This booklet, and the DVD it supports, is absolutely not about trying to speed up the journey to actual reading and writing.

- All the familiar adults in a baby and young child's life need to home in on what is properly tuned into early development and to avoid what will knock happy and effective learning right off track.
- It is really important that parents and early years practitioners resist any



- temptation to try to fast track children. It does not benefit early development if you try to speed up any aspect of their learning.
- The high risk is that you create a situation in which young children feel sure that they cannot do something – which was an unrealistic expectation in the first place. Also young children start to believe that being confused, maybe also unhappy, is a normal state to experience.

It is developmentally irresponsible to fast track any young children for literacy. But such an approach is likely to disadvantage the boys even more than their female peers. Some of the current concern about 'underachievement' and boys arises because of unrealistic expectations for the end of their early childhood. It is less that the boys are 'failing' and more that very adult-led, structured approaches are failing the boys. On average, young boys are often more physically active than their female peers. Methods that require boys to stay still are likely to disrupt their ability to concentrate. The situation is worsened by the erroneous belief that 'learning' only happens indoors or on a mat. When boys, and girls too, can move about, they will flourish, supported by familiar adults who know that every kind of learning, including early literacy, can happen outdoors.

When children are developmentally ready to crack the written code of their language, then they will need formal, structured teaching. They need to be taught how to read and write, just as children need well-judged instruction to grasp the abstract nature of mathematics. However, there is no convincing evidence from research reviews that teaching these more abstract and challenging skills is at all advantageous before children are close to 6 years of age. Under 5s are not helped by formal instruction for reading and writing. At this young age, such activities are disconnected from the everyday experiences that need to create the meaning for children. Additionally, young children have not developed the physical skills that make handwriting a feasible task to attempt. The best experiences for literacy (and numeracy too) over early childhood are led by the kind of first hand experiences that you have seen and heard in this in this film.

## Glossary

Some of these terms are used in the booklet. Others are explained here, because you may encounter them if you read further about teaching children to read and write, when they are ready.

**Alphabet:** the letters that can be used to write words in a language that uses the letter symbolic system. The English alphabet has 26 letters.

**Alliteration:** the pattern of sounds in words when a series of words starts with the same sound, like 'bing, bang, bong'.



**Beat competence:** the ability to pick up and maintain the steady beat from hearing a song or music, or to create a steady beat in one's own song

**Blend:** as in 'to blend' sounds - to bring individual sounds together in order to pronounce a word you are trying to read. You bring together d-o-g to read dog.

**CVC:** the short version of consonant-vowel-consonant. You may also see VC or CCVC. Vowels are created from the 5 letters a, e, i, o, u and the consonants are the remaining 21 letters of the English alphabet. So an example of a CVC word would be 'cat', a VC would be 'of' or a CCVC would be 'thin'.

**Continuous cursive script:** the flow of writing when separate letters are joined together rather than printed as single letters, also known as joined-up handwriting.

**Emergent writing:** deliberate mark making by children that has the general appearance of written script for their language. There may be some letters caught in the flow of marks and children may say that it is 'my writing'.

**Grapheme:** the written symbol of a phoneme. In alphabetic languages like English a grapheme is a letter or group of letters that represents a given sound in this word (not every time the sound appears in a word).

**Infant directed speech:** the modified version of spoken language, with lively tone and facial expression, that is best suited to communication with babies. This form of communication is sometimes called 'motherese' or 'parentese', to bring in fathers. But we need a general term because any adult, and older children sometimes, are able to adjust their communication in this way.

**Onset:** the beginning of a word. Words with the same onset sound show the pattern of alliteration, for example: string, struggle, strong.

**Phoneme:** the smallest unit of sound that can change the meaning of a word if said differently.

**Phonics:** a general term meaning knowledge of the structure of language – being able to take apart (segment) and put back together (blend) the different sounds, a grasp of the alphabet and how letters are used to enable reading and spelling for writing.

**Phonological awareness:** growing understanding of sounds and relationships between sounds, for example that children can play around with sounds, including onset and rime to produce deliberate alliteration and rhyme and created words.



**Rime:** the end of a word. Words with the same rime show a pattern of rhyme for example: moon, June, tune.

**Rhyme:** the pattern created when the ends of words have the same sound, like walk, talk, chalk.  
Some songs and poems are structured around a repeating pattern of rhyme at the ends of lines.

**Segment:** as in 'to segment a word' - to split up a word into its individual sounds (phonemes) to work out how to spell it – for instance the word dog has 3 phonemes /d/-/o/-/g/

**Teaching phonics:** direct instruction of the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent in words. The exact method differs between different approaches to phonics instruction.

## Resources, books & websites

- **Anything Left-handed** – a specialist company with a range of products that support left-handed children in a mainly right-handed world. PO Box 46, Witney, OX29 7HD Tel: 0845 872 3272 [www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk/](http://www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk/)
- Attenborough, Liz and Fahey, Rachel 2005 **Why do many young children lack basic language skills?** [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)
- Bayley, Ros – her Beat Baby materials and stories plus CD like **Maurice the Mouse** Lawrence Educational 0121 344 3004 [www.educationalpublications.com](http://www.educationalpublications.com)
- Bayley, Ros and Broadbent, Lynn 2005 **Flying start with literacy: activities for parents and children** Network Educational Press
- Bromley, Helen 2006 **Making my own mark: play and writing** Early Education
- Bromley, Helen 2007 **50 exciting ideas for story boxes to make** Lawrence Educational
- Caddell, Dorothy 1988 **Numeracy in the early years: what the research tells us** Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum download from [www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/images/numeracyinearlyyears\\_tcm4-124469.pdf](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/images/numeracyinearlyyears_tcm4-124469.pdf)



- Campbell, Robin 1999 ***Literacy from home to school: reading with Alice*** Trentham Books
- Clark, Christina and Foster, Amelia 2005 ***Children's and young people's reading habits and preferences: the who, what, why, where and when*** [www.literacytrust.org.uk/Research/readsurvey.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Research/readsurvey.html)
- Chilvers, Di 2006 ***Young children talking: the art of conversation and why children need to chatter*** Early Education
- Department for Children Schools and Families 2008 ***Mark making matters: young children making meaning in all areas of learning and development*** Search by short title to download on <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>
- Department for Children Schools and Families 2008 ***The Early Years Foundation Stage – Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five*** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/EYFS](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/EYFS)
- Drummond, Mary Jane (2003) ***Assessing children's learning*** David Fulton
- Early Education leaflets Learning together – for example ***Making their mark*** and ***The road to reading*** download from [www.early-education.org.uk](http://www.early-education.org.uk).
- Featherstone, Sally (ed) 2007 ***L is for Sheep: getting ready for phonics*** Featherstone Education. Sally Featherstone has edited or written the practical Little Books series. Many of those titles are directly relevant to early literacy, for example the Little Book of... Storyboards, Storytelling, Mark Making, Painting, Games with Sounds, Puppets in Stories. For the full list see [www.acblack.com/featherstone/](http://www.acblack.com/featherstone/)
- Ginsborg, Jane and Locke, Ann 2002 ***Catching up ... or falling behind?*** [www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/ginsborg.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/ginsborg.html)
- Goswami, Usha 2003 ***How to beat dyslexia The Psychologist volume 16 no 9*** [www.bps.org.uk/publications/thepsychologist/search-the-psychologist-online.cfm](http://www.bps.org.uk/publications/thepsychologist/search-the-psychologist-online.cfm) This is a useful general article about the task of reading
- Gupta, Anthea Fraser undated but post 2000 ***Sounds and letters in English*** [www.leeds.ac.uk/english/staff/afg/phonhtm.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/english/staff/afg/phonhtm.htm)
- Hughes, Anne and Ellis, Sue 1998 ***Writing it Right? Children Writing 3-8*** Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum download from [www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/Images/writingitright\\_tcm4-124463.pdf](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/Images/writingitright_tcm4-124463.pdf)
- ***Keeping the Beat*** – music CDs [www.keepingthebeat.co.uk](http://www.keepingthebeat.co.uk)



- Kenner, Charmian 2000 **Home pages: literacy links for bilingual children** and **2004 Becoming biliterate: young children learning different writing systems** both by Trentham Books If you google her name then both these books come up with a lead to this link, which provides samples from the books and useful links elsewhere for exploring this subject [http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=iDw3KJIG1jAC&dq=charmian+kenner&source=gbs\\_summary\\_s&cad=0](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=iDw3KJIG1jAC&dq=charmian+kenner&source=gbs_summary_s&cad=0) Charmian Kenner also has an article Bilingual children's benefits [www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/kenner.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/kenner.html) and Bilingual children's uses of popular culture in text-making on [www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/05/06/94/CK\\_4\\_11.pdf](http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/05/06/94/CK_4_11.pdf)
- Lindon, Jennie 2005 **Understanding child development: linking theory and practice** Hodder Arnold
- Lindon, Jennie 2006 **Helping babies and toddlers learn: a guide to good practice with under threes** National Children's Bureau
- Lindon, Jennie 2008 (Four practical guides to child development) **What does it mean to be two? (Three, Four, Five)** Step Forward Publishing. Also *What does it mean to be one?* in press for 2009
- Lindon, Jennie 2007 **Understanding children and young people – development 5-18 years** Hodder Arnold
- **National Literacy Trust** [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk) with link to the Talk to Your Baby website
- Munn, Penny 1997 **'What do children know about reading before they go to school?'** in Owen, Pamela and Pumfrey, Peter (eds) *Emergent and developing reading: messages for teachers* Falmer Press
- Nation, Paul and Waring, Robert 2007 **Vocabulary size, text coverage and word lists** [www.wordhacker.com/en/article/vocabularysizewordlists.htm](http://www.wordhacker.com/en/article/vocabularysizewordlists.htm)
- Nutbrown, Cathy 1996 **Early literacy education with parents** (video) Sheffield University Television
- Palmer Sue and Bayley, Ros 2004 **Foundations of literacy Network** Educational Press
- Rich, Diane 2002 **More than words: children developing communication, language and literacy** Early Education
- Rich, Diane; Casanova, Denise; Dixon, Annabelle; Drummond, Mary Jane; Durrant, Andrea and Myer, Cathy 2005 **First hand experiences: what matters to children – an alphabet of learning from the real world** Rich Learning Opportunities



- Rich, Diane; Drummond, Mary Jane and Myer, Cathy 2008 **Learning: what matters to children - an alphabet of what learners do** Rich Learning Opportunities [www.richlearningopportunities.co.uk](http://www.richlearningopportunities.co.uk)
- Robinson, Maria 2008 **Child development from birth to 8 - A journey through the early years** Open University Press McGraw-Hill
- Tassoni, Penny 2008 **Practical EYFS Handbook** Heinemann
- Togerson, Carol; Brooks, Greg and Hall, Jill 2006 **A systematic review of the research literature on the use of phonics in the teaching of reading and spelling** [www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR711\\_.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR711_.pdf) full report or a summary RB711
- Wyse, Dominic and Jones, Russell 2006 **Teaching English, language and literacy** Routledge

## Books for children

Many good quality books for children are published, but only a narrow range appears on the shelves of most high street stores. These mail order companies offer an excellent range, including some dual language books:

Letterbox Library tel: 020 7503 4801 [www.letterboxlibrary.com](http://www.letterboxlibrary.com).  
Lollipop Books tel: 01 626 211832 [www.lollipop.com](http://www.lollipop.com)  
Mantra Lingua tel: 020 8445 5123 [www.mantralingua.com](http://www.mantralingua.com)  
Shining Star tel: 023 8048 3633 [www.shiningstar.info](http://www.shiningstar.info)  
Tamarind Ltd tel: 020 8866 8808 [www.tamarindbooks.co.uk](http://www.tamarindbooks.co.uk)