

Phonics - Frequently asked questions

My child won't sit still and read

Try making reading fun. Make it more informal and read for short periods of time, say, five minutes.

Let your child run around in between periods of reading to let off steam. You might even try acting out the story. Likewise, choose a time when your child is not too tired.

Make it a special time that you share together and don't apply too much pressure.

Remember, it is quite normal for a young child not to sit still for very long!

My child's book only contains six words – help!

Phonics readers frequently have very few words. This is especially true in the early stages, when learning the easiest letter sounds.

The phonics readers my child has been given by their school are really dull

Phonics readers need to be simple, and even repetitive, so children can learn the focus sound.

Remember your child is only just starting. Phonics readers are carefully designed to enable children to develop a set of secure skills in reading and to build their confidence.

If books are too hard or too long, children can get demoralised.

What are multi-sensory approaches?

Children learn synthetic phonics through developing speaking and listening as well as reading and writing skills. Children see, hear, say and write each letter sound.

Many phonics programmes ask children to look, listen and do activities to help them learn phonic knowledge and skills in a fun, multi-sensory environment.

What are 'tricky words'?

Tricky words contain letters which don't represent their normal sounds, for example 'the', 'go', 'said'. These words are taught separately. Children are encouraged to learn the tricky bit, then to sound out and blend the rest of the word.

When do we introduce letter names?

Letter names are usually introduced in nursery through the 'Alphabet Song'.