



COCHRANE -FOUNTAIN CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At-Home Activities to support Early Phonics

Family Information: The goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn the alphabetic principle—the idea that letters represent the sounds of spoken language—and that there is an organized, logical, and predictable relationship between written letters and spoken sounds. Students learn that they can decode words by saying the sounds the letters represent and matching that to a word they know.

At Cochrane-Fountain City Elementary School, students are taught the relationships between letters and sounds in an explicit and systematic way using a scope and sequence to build from easier to more complex skills. In the Early Phonics stage, students learn many concepts:

- The sounds each consonant and vowel typically make
- Digraphs such as ch, sh, and th
- Consonant blends such as bl, gr, and st
- How Magic E changes the sound of the vowel before it
- Using syllable types Open, Closed, Magic E, and Vowel Team to help sound out two-syllable words
- Spelling rules such as when to use ff, ll, ss, ck, tch, and dge and when to choose C or K
- Using ed, s/es, and ing endings in words

Check out [Reading 101 for Parents](#) to learn more about phonics. Students learn a lot of phonics in elementary school, and you do not need to be an expert in phonics to provide great support to your child at home. The activities below can help your child develop skills and stamina as a beginning reader by supporting the phonics learning they are doing at school.

Supporting Your Child While Reading:

- A daily routine of having your child read for 10 minutes on most days is excellent practice for phonics and sets up an important habit for years to come. If you're not able to sit down with your child to read, they can read aloud to you while you do household tasks.
- When students get stuck on a word or ask for help, focus their attention on the written letters with a series of prompts such as this:
 - Say "sound it out" while pointing to the word.
 - "Blend the sounds together."
 - "Does that sound like a word you know?"
 - If some words in the text are too hard for your child to read yet, tell them the word and let them keep going.
 - If many words in the text are too hard for your child to read yet, this is a great book to read aloud until your child is ready to try it on their own again.
- Where to find texts to read
 - Books and printed texts your child brings home from school



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- The public library - ask where to find Beginning Reader books
- Word lists and sentences that specifically practice the phonics pattern that your child is working on can provide great practice. You can find word lists and sentences here:
 - [Word lists and sentences with short vowels](#)
 - [Word lists and sentences with long vowels](#)
 - If you are unsure what skills your child is currently working on, ask their classroom teacher, interventionist, or case manager.

Games:

- Card Games: Write words with patterns your child is working on on index cards. Make two cards for each word; then use the cards to play Go Fish or Memory.
- Scavenger Hunt: Write a simple word down on a piece of paper and have your child read it and then go find that object in your home. Examples: block, ball, milk, sock, pen, hat.

Writing:

- When your child is drawing or coloring, encourage them to label items in the picture by writing down the sounds they hear. Children typically start by labeling with the first sound in a word. Later they learn to add the final sound in a word, and then all the sounds they hear.

Final Tips for Phonics Learning: Learning how to apply all of the letter-sound relationships in English takes a long time, so it's important to be patient and supportive. Short, daily routines are better than trying to do longer practice once a week. With consistency and positivity, your child will continue to grow in their knowledge and application of phonics in order to become an independent reader!

Reading Aloud to Your Child:

While your child is learning phonics, they also benefit from hearing books read aloud that are too complex for them to read on their own yet. This helps them build vocabulary, background knowledge about the world, and a love of reading. Fifteen minutes of reading—for example, each night at bedtime—can make a huge difference in your child's readiness for learning to read.

- Choose books that are appropriate for your child's age and interests. Children at this stage may be ready for picture books with more sentences per page.
- Allow your child to choose which books they want to hear.
- Repeating books over and over may get boring for us as adults, but children learn from the repetition and familiarity. If they want to read the same book again, then do!
- Talk about the pictures as you read.
- Build vocabulary by explaining new words while you read. (Example: "gigantic" is another word for really big.)
- Ask questions about the story. "What do you think that character is feeling on this page?" "What do you think will happen next?"

[Click here](#) for more tips on reading aloud to your child.