

**Sight Words:** (words like you, the, there etc.)

*Guidelines taken from A Balanced Approach to Literacy in the Early Years:*

Children need to acquire a mental bank of words that they know automatically by sight. This means a child recognises a word as a whole rather than having to decode it sound by sound. Some words are less amenable than others to phonic analysis and so children benefit from being taught to learn these as sight words e.g. /said/, /does/. The more frequently a child reads a word the more likely they word will be retained in long-term memory. Therefore, children benefit from both reading and writing target sight words and meeting these words in their readers and library books. When words can be read automatically by sight, there is a freeing up of short-term memory capacity for other activities such as comprehension. Below are some strategies we use to teach sight words at school and may be useful to you in further consolidating the sight words at home. Please try to make it fun so the child will have a good foundation and a positive attitude to reading.

- Present the word on a flashcard/whiteboard
- Draw attention to the initial and final sound of the word
- Look at the tall letters and letters with a tail and draw a shape around the word
- Look for familiar words or commonly occurring letter patterns in the word e.g. -ay, -ight, -ing
- Ask the child to put the word into an oral sentence
- Ask the child to look at the word and say what it is
- Place the target word on the table and ask the child to point to the word. Practice this step repeatedly.
- After practising this step, point to the word and ask the child "what's this word?"

**Blending:** (words like can, bat, run etc.)

Unlike sight words, these words can be sounded out if the child is unsure. Sound out the word in a robot voice (c-a-t) and put the sounds together really fast like a race car (CAT).

## **Spellings:**

Some ways to learn spellings:

1. Group the spellings into patterns e.g. "\_\_\_at" words and "\_\_\_un" words
2. Looks, say, cover, write, check - Look at the word and work out which bit is familiar and which bit is tricky. Ask your child to write the word in the air and say the letters. Then cover the word and see if they can write it correctly.
3. Say it as it sounds - Say the word so that each letter sound is heard.

## **Other Ideas:**

- Incorporate spellings into a word search.
- Draw words into or with children's bath foam or with bathtub letters.
- Use magnetic letters to make the word, muddle up the letters so that your child can unscramble it. Or use Scrabble letters instead and ask them to total the value of the word (extra maths practise!).
- Cut letters out of the newspaper then sort and stick them down to spell the words.
- Use various objects to spell out the word e.g. dried beans, pasta or lentils. Or use foods such as raisins which they could then eat if they spell the word correctly!
- Write the words lots of times using various types of pens, pencils, crayons and colours.
- Take turns to write the word on each other's backs. Can they guess which word it is?
- Make pairs of word cards and play a matching game - turn the cards over and muddle them up, flip over 2 cards, if they match keep them, if not turn them over again but try to remember where they are.
- Write the word with some letters missing and ask your child to complete the word with the correct letters.

We hope these strategies and ideas will help you to complete the homework with your child. We will be working on these strategies daily in class which will really help with reading as the year progresses.