










What can I do to help my child develop phonics skills?

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General tips

-  Keep reading together—it's important that your learner continues to see reading as something magical and fun. This will help motivate them when phonics skills start to feel tricky or boring.
-  Start introducing some decodable or early reader books into your read aloud routine. These books use words that learners can sound out using simple phonics patterns. If your child is ready, point to simple words, and ask what sounds they start with or ask them to sound the words out. Eventually, take turns reading pages to each other.
-  Keep phonics activities short and sweet. Play a quick word game and stop while it's still fun.
-  In whatever word game you're playing, let your child quiz you too. It's always fun to be the "teacher."

Letter sound activities

-  Play I Spy around your house for things that start with a specific letter.
-  Name a letter, and see how many words your child can list that start with that sound.
-  Say a word (e.g., "tree") and ask what letter and sound it starts with.
-  Make flashcards of letters and play memory or Go Fish.
-  Keep paper and markers handy, and encourage your child to draw and "write" about their drawings. Don't correct or help with spelling unless your child asks. Worrying too much about spelling at this stage can be discouraging and confusing as your learner begins to understand how letters create words.

Blending words

-  Play rhyming games to help build knowledge of word families. For example, teach your child the "at" ending, then take turns naming all the words that end with "at." As you name "at" words, ask your child what sound is at the beginning. Help them write the words as you list them.
-  Encourage your child to write letters and notes to friends and family using what they know about letter sounds. Misspelling and sounding out words are all part of learning to read. Don't correct them. One day, when they are grown-up you will cherish their incorrectly spelled words.
-  When your child is ready to learn the long vowel sounds, introduce them to the "magic e" at the end of words. Play games where you turn short vowel words into long vowel words by adding an e (e.g., "pin" becomes "pine").
-  As you're reading together, point out words that have various spelling patterns (e.g., point to the word "beach" and notice together how "ea" says the long "e" sound).
-  As you read together, play "word hunt" (e.g., "Can you find the word 'pizza' on this page?").
-  Reread favorite books. Familiar texts are easier for learners to decode.