



Issue Four

# Supporting Early Learners

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## Dear Parents,

Children have the best possible chance to reach their full potential when educators and parents work as partners to provide supportive learning environments. These newsletters have been written by Bev DeMonyé and Gloria Gustafson for parents wanting to help their children at home. You are welcome to email us at [learningtoread@telus.net](mailto:learningtoread@telus.net) or visit our website [www.readwritewithkids.com](http://www.readwritewithkids.com) to view other resources.

## Phonics Plus

### Phonics

Children who are just learning to read use phonics or sounding out to figure out what words say.

Phonics involves:

- knowing the letters of the alphabet
- learning the sounds that the letters usually make
- matching the letters to their sounds
- learning how to blend or put together letters to sound out a word
- rhyming to build word families (eg. **cat, bat, mat, rat, sat**)
- changing letters to make new words (eg. **cat** to **rat** to **ran** to **run**)

Your child can learn these skills in a fun and playful way. Sing the alphabet song, play with magnetic letters, use alphabet puzzles or cards and/or make a personal alphabet book.



## Word Families

Once your child has learned the alphabet letters and the matching sounds they can begin rhyming, reading, printing and spelling words such as:

- mat rat sat bat cat fat hat; can fan man pan ran van; ham jam tam ram; cap tap map nap; mad fad sad had; bag rag tag wag
- bed red fed led; set get yet pet wet let net met jet; ten den hen men pen; beg leg keg
- big dig jig rig wig; dip hip rip tip sip lip; win tin bin pin fin; did hid kid lid; hit bit fit kit pit; rib fib
- dog jog hog fog; got not pot rot lot hot; mop pop hop top; fox box; cod nod sod
- but nut cut hut; cub tub rub; sun fun bun run; bug dug jug tug; cut hut; cup up; hum sum

## Word Beginnings

Children become confident at this stage and quickly start using a variety of word beginnings to change words such as **hut** to **shut**. Other common beginnings are:

- pr- tr- fl- bl- cl- sm- sk- str- spl- th- ch- sh- gr- wh-

## Word Endings

More word families can be built using endings such as **-ack** to make **back, sack, rack, black, shack, stack**. Other endings to try are:

- -ack -aw -ay -ad -ain -ir -or -all -ur -ank -ash -ate -ain -ake -ale -ame -ell -eat -est -ill -ing -ice -ick -ide -ine -ight -ock -ore -uck -ump -unk -ing -ung -ong -ang -ank -ail -eed -out -ink -ore -ine
- Many of these words can be further expanded using -s, -ed and -ing. For example: **jump, jumps, jumped** and **jumping**.

## Besides Phonics

Children also learn to read by using the following strategies.

**Memory:** When children see words over and over they are better able to recall them quickly and easily when they come across them in new reading material.

**Clues from Text:** Pictures and diagrams give children clues to what words they might come across as they read. They are able to predict or guess what word would make sense within a sentence.

**Background Knowledge:** Children who have been read to and have had many rich experiences are able to draw on this knowledge to confirm ideas and words they encounter in their reading.

**Word Structure:** Children are fascinated with words and word parts. As they read they build their reading vocabulary by becoming aware of the structure of some words such as compound words (**upstairs**), contractions (**can't**) and little words inside big words (**story**).

**Have fun with activities and games that use words. The more children read and work with words the better they will read, write and spell. Celebrate their confidence as word builders and take time to enjoy reading books together.**