



KINDERGARTEN- Helping your Kindergarten child at home with English

This guide can help carers and parents support their Kindergarten child at home with the learning area of English.

Home languages

For children learning English as an additional language or dialect, continuing to develop literacy skills in their home language is important for their development of literacy in English. Speaking regularly to your child in your home language, reading to your child from books written in your home language, and modelling writing in your home language, will help them to develop English language skills.

Oral language and communicating

Oral language and communicating focuses on developing speaking, listening and interacting skills.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- modelling listening skills by taking turns when speaking with your child and waiting for them to respond
- asking your child open-ended questions about their day or surroundings. For example, Tell me about a book you read today. Or How did you make that artwork?
- gradually building the number of verbal instructions from 1 single direction to 2 directions then up to 3 directions for your child to follow. For example, pack your bag, brush your teeth and put on your shoes.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary focuses on developing the knowledge of words, their meaning and how they are used and understood while speaking, listening, reading and writing.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- using descriptive words for people and objects when you are speaking with your child. Instead of saying, There's a dog going for a walk, say There's a big, brown dog going for a walk with our neighbour, Mr Smith.
- discussing the meaning of new words that come up in everyday conversations with your child. Dad is going to reverse the car now. The word 'reverse' means to go backwards.
- talking about objects that you notice your child showing particular interest in such as That butterfly has such beautiful wings. They are red, blue and yellow.

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness focuses on the sounds within spoken words such as syllables and rhymes.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- clapping or tapping the syllables they can hear in words when reading together. For example, dog (one syllable – one clap), zeb/ra (2 syllables – 2 claps) and el/e/phat (3 syllables – 3 claps)
- playing rhyming games such as starting with a base word and taking turns to say a new rhyming word. For example, the base word of hat, can be rhymed with bat, sat, mat and flat. Made-up words can also be used such as blat, lat and zat
- reading or listening to nursery rhymes, songs and poetry.

Print conventions

Print conventions focus on the knowledge of how books and written language work. This includes understanding how books are used, the reading direction and the difference between letters, words and sentences.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- pointing your finger under words when you are reading with your child
- making sure your child can see how your finger moves from the end of a line to the next line in a 'return sweep'
- using different voices to show different characters are speaking when you see speech marks (' ').

Phonic knowledge

Phonic knowledge focuses on the letter symbol in the alphabet (grapheme) that is used to represent a spoken sound (phoneme) in a word.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- stretching some simple words into sounds, such as d- o- g, while you are reading and writing together. Make sure you say the sound, not the letter name
- starting an alphabet book and choosing a new word to add after each book you read. For example, your child loves the word 'pudding' that they have found in a book. Discuss what sound the word starts with and then they can add the word pudding to the 'pP' page of the alphabet book
- playing 'I spy with my little eye, something beginning with ...' Make sure you use the sound, not the letter.

Reading fluency

Reading fluency focuses on developing a reading style that is smooth and expressive. Frequently used words are recognised straightaway.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- using a steady speed and expressive voice when reading with your child
- re-reading favourite books with your child to encourage confidence and instant recognition of familiar words
- reading a variety of everyday materials with your child such as street signs, shop names, food labels or shopping lists.

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension focuses on understanding the meaning of words and sentences that are read, while recalling information about characters, events and ideas.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- talking about the front cover, title and illustrations before reading begins
- asking questions about a story while you or your child are reading. For example, Why do you think that happened? or What might happen next?
- drawing pictures together about the main events in a story in order

- discussing the meaning of new words found in books and around your everyday life.

Creating written texts

Creating written texts focuses on writing texts using simple sentences.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- encouraging them to first draw what they want to write about to gather their ideas
- asking them to read their writing to you and talk about their thoughts and pictures
- writing new stories together
- using a writing journal to write and draw in every day.

Spelling

Spelling focuses on using different strategies to spell high-frequency words.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- cutting out individual letters from magazines to make high-frequency words. Glue the letters in the correct order to make the words
- talking about how some words can be made plural by adding the letter 's' at the end. For example, dog/dogs, car/cars
- making word jumbles for high-frequency or sight words for your child to rearrange the letters to find the word. This could be done using fridge magnet letters. For example, present your child with the letters a- t- c which they then re-arrange into c- a- t. Help them with a clue if they are having trouble, like it purrs when it's happy
- investigating words which sound the same but have different spellings and meaning (homophones). For example, great/grate, stare/stair, wood/would, knight/night
- investigating words which look and sound the same but have different meanings (homonyms). For example, bark on a tree / bark the sound a dog makes, rose a flower in a garden / rose went upwards, right to be correct / right the opposite of left.

Handwriting

Handwriting focuses on the clear production of all lower-case and upper-case letters in NSW Foundation Style.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- assisting your child to write the letters of the alphabet and make simple words using a variety of materials or supplies. For example, using brightly coloured pens and pencils on paper, chalk on concrete, flattened sand in a sandpit or with Lego pieces on the floor
- encouraging your child to write with the hand that feels most comfortable, using a grip that is flexible and allows for movement in the fingers and wrist
- practising matching lower-case letters to their corresponding upper-case letters.

Understand and respond to literature

Understand and respond to literature focuses on the reactions, thoughts and opinions children have when reading.

You can help your Kindergarten child at home by:

- discussing and comparing your favourite characters after reading
- discussing the morals and ideas behind a story, why the story was written and what might be the message the author wishes to convey to send to readers
- recalling some interesting facts, such as how tall a Tyrannosaurus Rex was, or naming the parts of a bicycle