

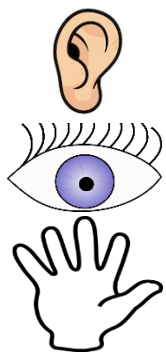
Supporting children who are struggling to read



Reading seems to come more naturally to some children than others. There is a risk that children who struggle to acquire early reading skills can go on to struggle in other areas of the curriculum. They also risk suffering from low self-esteem. At William Tyndale we understand these risks and take early action in school in many ways including through early dyslexia support, daily supported reading and reading recovery.

Below are some ideas which parents and carers can use at home to support a child who is struggling to read. The activities and games suggested will complement the work they do in class. At William Tyndale we aim to create '**balanced readers**' who not only hold the books correctly and decode the given print but also read for meaning and are able to answer questions and give increasingly complex opinions about what they are reading. This helps support the development of language and vocabulary.

At William Tyndale we understand that a **multi-sensory** approach to teaching can be much more beneficial for struggling readers. This means using all the pathways:



auditory (saying)

visual (seeing); and

kinaesthetic (doing) E.g. making the word with magnetic letters, writing the word in sand, in the air, writing it with chalk, vertically and horizontally, small and big, using different coloured pens, using 'Wikistix' etc. This is called *overlearning*.



At home, don't forget to work with your child in regular, short bursts, rather than one long period of time.

Magnetic letters

If you can, invest in some **magnetic letters** (ones that are ridged so more kinaesthetic e.g. *Quercetti magnetic letters*). These are very versatile and can be used in many ways. For example:

- **Sorting** Can your child quickly sort an assortment of letters? Just use letters that the child knows to start with. Start with 4 letters and avoid confusing

letters e.g. b, p, d or w, m. Increase the amount and the difficulty gradually. Even from the beginning, encourage your child to use **both hands** at the same time when they carry out this activity – this develops fast visual processing and discrimination.



Follow these links for demo:

Basic version: <https://youtu.be/oBhXWLOHIR4>

Advanced version: <https://youtu.be/rOILw-cogmY>

- **Make a word** with magnetic letters. Emphasise that we write words from left to right. Pick a word they have come across e.g. their name or a word they have come across in their reading book. Let your child watch you build the word from left to right, letter by letter. Tell your child which word you have made. Break the letters out of the intact word on the right and move them one by one over to the left. Say:

'If we were going to write this word we would have to make it letter by letter'

Rebuild the word and ask them to build a copy. Pass them the magnetic letters one by one in correct sequence. Ask them

'What word have you made?'

Follow this link for demo: <https://youtu.be/2b4kiQ6FmJU>

Familiar reading

Make sure that your child has the opportunity to read familiar books, not books that they know from memory, but books that they are successful at and has to do some *problem solving at points of difficulty i.e. words they don't know how to read.*

Cut-up sentences

You could choose a sentence from their reading book that you cut up into words. Then your child can put it back together. This will support:

- directional behaviours;
- one- to one correspondence of spoken and written words; and
- self- monitoring and searching.



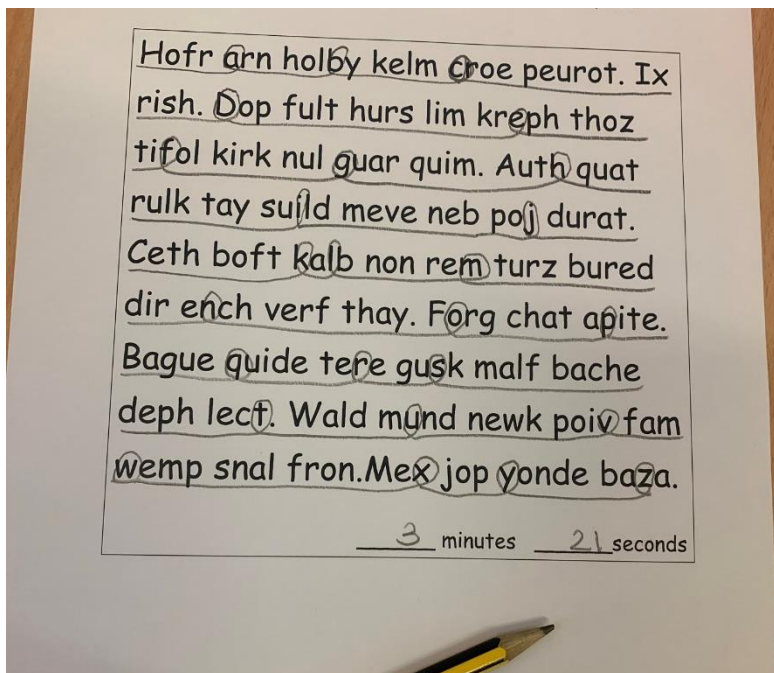
Tracking

Use letter tracking grids like this one (there is a blank one in the appendix).

Whist being timed, children find the letters of the alphabet in order i.e. starting on the top left, they **scan along each line** search for 'a', then 'b', then 'c' and circle when they find it. They should not take the pencil off the paper (see completed example below). Can they improve their time?

This will support:

- left- to right scanning;
- fast visual processing; and
- return sweep (moving to the next line down in the text and back to the left).



Follow this link for demo: <https://youtu.be/qZQIUajJuAg>

Spelling

Magnetic letters can be useful when you are building up a child's bank of known words (see above). This needs to be as **multisensory** as possible.

Clap the syllables with your child and encourage them to do this independently with words with more than one syllable.

Memory Training

The following activities will support **memory**.

If you can, invest in a set of **wooden letters** (otherwise, just use magnetic letters). Tell your child to put the letters in an arch shape in alphabetical order.



1. Say 3 letters slowly (interval of 2 seconds) in alphabetical order e.g. b. m. t. (use letter names rather than sounds).
2. Your child is not allowed to touch the arch until you have finished saying the letters.
3. If they find this easy, increase time by 5 seconds between each letter. Aim to build up to 7 letters.
4. When they have mastered this, give letters in a jumbled order. Your child should put them in the order you give
5. Once they have mastered stage 4, they can move on to putting them into alphabetical order).

Talk about strategies such as **pairing/chunking** (thinking of the letters given in pairs/chunks) or **verbally rehearsing** (saying it out loud or whispering it quietly to yourself before you begin the task).

Follow this link for demo: <https://youtu.be/Y6haDpD2KKk>

Memory is like a muscle! You can make it better.



Supporting Auditory and Visual Memory

Working memory is dividing up into auditory and visual memory.

Auditory memory is the ability to remember spoken sequences such as numbers, words and sentences. **Auditory memory** involves listening, **processing**, organising and storing the information that has been heard, then acting upon the information

Visual memory is the ability to remember or recall information such as activities, pictures or words that have been viewed in the past. Short-term **visual memory** is the ability to recall images that have just been viewed

Auditory memory activities

- Start the day with a single word (e.g. colour) to be remembered until home time.
- Play 'I went shopping and bought...'
- Play 'I went on holiday and packed...'
- Play 'Simon says...'
- Learn the lyrics to their favourite pop songs / learn poetry off by heart.
- Ask a simple question: Then ask a second question and the children have to give you the answer to the preceding one. Keep going.

Visual Memory activities

- Kim's game, arrange 5 items on a tray, show it to the child, then cover it. Can they name the objects? (extend to include more objects)
- Show a variety of items one at a time, then mix in a number of other items before asking them to select the original. this could be done with Coloured counters, coloured pens, small toys - even coins or magnetic letters
- Cut out a picture and give the child 1 minute to look at it. Ask questions for example, What colour was the woman's hat? Brain Box has many manufactured games like this. Or check out Happy Puzzle Company
- Pairs. Shuffle matching pairs face down. Players pick up 2 at a time. (Pelmanism)

Supporting language acquisition

Children who are struggling to read might also be accessing books which offer lower level vocabulary. It is important that children are exposed to age-appropriate vocabulary so please remember to **read higher level texts to your child** as well as well as reading books at their own level *with* them. An alternative is for your child to listen to higher level **audio books**.

Suggestions of ready-made games to support:

Pass the Bomb / Pass the Bomb Junior



Dobble



Follow this link for a demo: <https://youtu.be/CI7MYjLsgZQ>

Appendix

Tracking sheet (Blank version)

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

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