

## Parents

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Engagement, listening and attention
- Social conventions and awareness of others
- Sentence structure and grammar
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- Comprehension
- Requests and questions, categorisation, retelling and elaborating
- Playful and creative use of language
- Information giving, explanation and justification
- Description, prediction and reflection
- Motivation and choice
- Conventions of print
- Phonological and phonemic awareness
- Phonics and word recognition
- Vocabulary for reading and writing
- Purpose, genre and voice
- Sequencing and summarising
- Comprehension, fluency and self-correction

### Phonological Awareness

There is an emphasis in the early years at school on phonological awareness. Phonological awareness involves **language development, awareness of rhyme, syllables and sounds in words**. These skills are prerequisites to reading and writing. The development of language and literacy skills are vital for learning. Speak to your child frequently to support his/her learning. Read and practice poems in Irish, in English and/ or in your own choice of language. You could practice the rhymes he/she is learning in school and read books that are written in rhyme. Rhyme as a concept is important, and can be experienced in Irish, in English or in any language. Emphasise rhythm or syllables while reading with your child and play games with your child. It is not always necessary to conduct a formal lesson. You can support your child at the shops, out walking or while doing other things.

Ensure that these activities are enjoyable. Try these examples and others;

- Which one does not rhyme?  
**méar/béar/cat** or **cat/hat/dog**
- What word rhymes with...?
- Count the syllables in words -  
**úll** (x1), **plu-ma** (x2), **ba-na-na** (x3),  
**grape** (x1), **app-le** (x2), **ba-na-a** (x3)
- Initial sounds -  
**Itheann Dónall Damhán Alla...**  
**duilleoga, dathanna agus rudaí**  
**donna** or **Sammy Snake eats...**  
**sandwiches, sausages and snails.**

There is evidence to say that children are more successful in education if they are supported at home.

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### Talking and Listening

Language and literacy development is extremely important for children in the world of learning. Language is used to communicate, to discuss feelings, to gain information and to understand and develop ideas. Children begin school with some prior knowledge of language from home, both spoken and written. These skills are the starting point for school.



Have conversations regularly with your child to extend his/her vocabulary and language experience. This can be done in Irish or in the home language. All language experiences will assist with literacy development. If a child has a wide vocabulary in speech he/she will have a wide vocabulary for reading and writing. Do not be concerned if your child does not speak Irish initially if Irish is not the home language. There are stages in language development in an immersion setting. Initially the child speaks the home language and the teacher speaks the target language. Then, the child begins to use the target language in rhymes and songs and in familiar phrases and then, gradually, begins to use the target language on a wider basis. This is a long process and depends on the individual child and the support and language experience in school and at home.

### Irish

Often Irish is the only language spoken to the children in a Gaelscoil or in a Scoil Ghaeltachta no matter what language is spoken at home. This means the child is immersed in the target language of the school, Irish. Parents are encouraged to attend Irish classes or to follow a learning programme to support children at home if they are not confident with their own Irish competencies. There is evidence to support the view that children who are supported at home have better success in education. Speak to the class teacher about ways to support your child's learning at home. Search for books, television programmes, computer programmes, clubs, etc. in Irish to extend your child's experience of Irish outside the classroom.

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### Irish and English

Children do not need to have Irish at home to develop in this language acquisition process. The emphasis is on the concept and on literacy skills. Parents can support literacy development in Irish or the home language and this will be of general benefit in language development. Children in Irish-medium schools and in Gaeltacht schools develop the same literacy skills in Irish and in English in the primary school. Skills are often transferable and if a skill is developed in one language it often transpires in both languages.

Read with your child as often as you can in your choice of language. There are skills in reading that transpire in all language experience.

### Reading with your Child

Children often have books from school to read at home and parents can support the development of reading skills. The school will offer direction regarding effective methods of support and teachers will have specific suggestions. These books will contain sight words that your child will see often. You should encourage that these words be read fluently. Then there are a variety of strategies to read new words, picture clues, textual clues, familiar phrases, meaning of the text, an initial or end sound, syllables or sounds in a word. Help your child to try these different strategies. Have regular stops in the reading to discuss meaning. Play word games with your child, the teacher will have suggestions. Read other texts as often as you can in your choice of language. There are skills in reading that transcend all languages.

Practise the strategies suggested by the school for consolidation. Read stories, information books, poems, directions, time-tables, magazines, etc. Show your child that you enjoy reading.

### Writing with your Child

Encourage your child to write as often as possible, cards, notes, shopping lists, etc. Do not be concerned if this is not legible or correct, the attempt is more important. When you write yourself pronounce each word and sound it out while your child is listening. Let your child see that you enjoy writing.

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### Supporting your Child

Children are best being taught skills and strategies that will render them independent in learning. We all have different ways of learning. Help your child discover his/her own method of learning and remembering information. It is important that children learn through investigation. Encourage your child when he/she makes attempts. Help your child to make connections in the things that he/she is learning. Enjoy supporting your child.



### References

A Guide to the Irish Education System: *An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna*. (2014) <http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/A-Guide-to-the-Irish-Education-System.pdf>

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