Helping Your Child with the 'ea' Sound

Key points

- In Reception (the first year of primary school), children learn phonics, which is the relationship between letters and sounds.
- A digraph is when two letters, like 'ea', work together to make one sound.
- The 'ea' digraph most often makes a long 'ee' sound, as in 'sea' or 'leaf'.
- Sometimes 'ea' can make different sounds, such as the 'e' in 'bread' or the 'ai' in 'break'.
- If your child finds a word that doesn't sound as expected, it is a great chance to show them that some words are just a bit different.
- Every school may teach these sounds in a different order, so it is always a good idea to check with your child's teacher.

Things to try at home

- Go on a 'sound hunt' around the house or in a favourite book to find words with 'ea' in them.
- Play a game of 'I Spy' using words that have the 'ea' sound, like 'leaf' or 'tea'.
- When you come across a tricky 'ea' word while reading together, simply tell your child, 'This one is a bit cheeky and makes a different sound!'
- Draw a simple picture of a 'sea' or a 'leaf' and write the word underneath together.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher or the school's phonics lead.
- The GOV.UK website for official guidance on the National Curriculum.