Letters and Sounds: Helping Your Child in Reception

Key points

- In Reception, children learn phonics, which is a way of teaching reading by linking sounds to letters.
- Letters have both a name (like 'aitch') and a sound (like 'h'), which can be confusing for young children.
- Schools focus on the sounds first because these are what children use to blend letters together to read words.
- It is very common for children to mix up the name of a letter with the sound it makes.
- Using the sounds your child learns at school helps them build confidence in their reading and writing.
- Every school may use a slightly different phonics programme, so it is a good idea to ask your child's teacher for their specific sounds.

Things to try at home

- Play 'I Spy' using the sounds of letters rather than their names.
- Look for a sound in a favourite storybook and see if you can find other things in the room that start with that same sound.
- Draw letters in a tray of sand or salt while saying the sound the letter makes.
- Go on a 'sound walk' and listen for sounds in the environment that match the letters your child is learning.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher or the school's phonics lead.
- The GOV.UK website for information on the National Curriculum.
- The school's parent handbook or newsletter.