



Swanmore C.E. (Aided) Primary School

How can we support school readiness for our preschool children?

Preparation

Starting school is an exciting time for young children and their parents. It can be a daunting time, too. But with a little preparation and encouragement, most children will settle in easily at school, ready to learn and discover an exciting new world.

Your child doesn't need to be able to read, write or do calculations before they start school.

Children start school with a wide range of abilities and, at school we are experienced at helping children progress at their own level.

What is most important is that you and your child have fun together in the final preschool months - sharing stories, singing songs, playing games and talking about anything and everything.

The purpose of this presentation is to offer tips and ideas to help you and your child be ready to start school with a smile.

Physical Development 3-4 year old goals

Gross Motor skills

Skipping, hopping, standing on one leg, balancing, riding (scooters, trikes and bikes) and ball skills.

Climbing steps and stairs, or apparatus,

Use large-muscle movements to wave , crawl through tunnels, sweep up leaves

Fine Motor skills (preference for dominant hand?)

Use scissors, paintbrushes, toothbrush, knife, fork, spoon,

Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils.

Be increasingly independent as they get dressed and undressed

Physical Development preschool focus

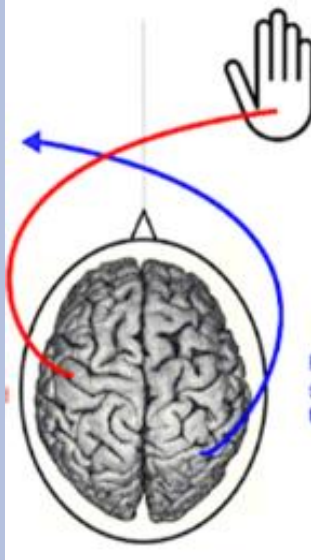
Gross motor skills

- Run well
- Kick a ball
- Jump with both feet
- Climb confidently
- Catch a large ball
- Pedal a tricycle
- Skip, hop, stand on one leg
- Match their developing physical skills to tasks and activities

Fine motor skills

- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Use a comfortable grip with good control with pens and pencils
- Confident in make making
- To be able to thread a medium size bead onto a pipe cleaner
- Building good hand strength such as play dough gym

Physical Development – school readiness



Carpet time is where a lot of out teaching happens so its useful if you can practise sitting on the floor with their legs crossed. This develops;

- Core strength and postural stability
- encourages balance and
- cultivates the need to “cross the midline.” *Both the left and right side of the brain are designed to carry out specific tasks. When we cross the midline, we force both sides of the brain to work together, which helps develop higher order thinking skills, sensory integration, body awareness, and critical thinking skills.*

Try to avoid W sitting. This can;

- cause hip problems,
- restrict cross body movements,
- delay hand preference and
- limit development of core strength.



Physical Development – school readiness

Any opportunities to develop fine motor skills, hand strength and hand eye coordination will help with pencil control and stamina when they begin to write;

- Give your child some tube shaped dried pasta to thread onto a length of string.
- Try build a tower with blocks, stacking cups or fixing lego cubes together - how tall can your child build - you could also practise counting at the same time!
- Picking up small objects using their first two fingers and thumb also helps them to build and strengthen the muscles in their hands. You could try plastic tweezers to pick up small objects like raisins.
- Encourage your child to use a knife, fork and spoon at mealtimes.
- Roll a piece of blutack or playdough between fingers.
- Pinch clothes pegs when making a den with sheets or pegging up their artwork on a line.
- Play cafés and give your child a small tray to carry things on – they will need this skill when it comes to school lunchtimes.



Physical Development – school readiness

Try to develop tripod pencil grip. This will also help with control and stamina when holding a pencil. In school we say to the children “pinch, pinch, finger behind!” Pinch with thumb and index finger and rest middle finger behind. Whenever your child picks up a pencil, crayon or paintbrush this is the grip to encourage. Hand and finger strength will follow. This style is the best for developing stamina when writing.

10 Months
Pincer Grasp



12-15 Months
Palmar Supinate Grasp



2-3 Years
Digital Pronate Grasp



3-4 Years
Quadrupod Grasp



3-4 Years
Static Tripod Grasp



5-6 Years
Dynamic Tripod Grasp



Static Tripod Grasp



Child uses the whole pad of three fingers when holding the pencil. There is likely to be some wrist and forearm movement to move the pencil, whilst the fingers are static/ not moving.

Child uses the tips of their fingers on the pencil and holds it at more of an angle than vertical.

Their finger movements are move back in forth without any forearm or minimal wrist movement (the arm will be resting on the table or writing surface instead of floating above).

Dynamic Tripod Grasp



PSED 3-4 year old goals

(Personal, social, emotion development)

Self Regulation

Talk to friends and find ways to solve conflicts

Talk about their feelings using words like 'happy', 'sad', 'angry' or 'worried'

Managing self

Be increasingly independent in meeting their own care needs (dressing, toileting, taking care of their own belongings)

Begin to be aware of the meaning of healthy – needing to stay warm, use suncream, have rest, drink water and know which food is good for you and which are treats

Choose and use activities and resources independently (asking for help when they need it)

Building Relationships

Show more confidence in new social situations

Play with one or more other children

Remember and follow the rules, understanding why they are important

Begin to think of others feelings

PSED preschool focus (Personal, social, emotion development)

- Feel confident, independent and resilient within themselves
- Able to name emotions such as happy, sad, scared
- Understand and know how best to express their and or others' emotions
- Have a sense of responsibility such as when asked to carry out appropriate tasks
- Able to maintain focus for a short period of time
- Begin to understand how others might be feeling
- Being independent with their own care needs such as toileting, washing hands
- Have a 'can do' attitude
- Take risks
- Pay attention to detail
- Be proud of how and why they have accomplished something
- Develop a lifelong curiosity for learning
- Able to play alongside other children

PSED— school readiness

Practice developing independence with belongings. When your child starts school they will have to take responsibility for their bookbag, water bottle and coat. In addition they will need to be able to hang their coat and their jumper on their peg.

You could begin to encourage the skill of looking after their things at home.

Do they hang their own coat up at home or at preschool?

Can they begin to carry their own lunchbox or a water bottle up to preschool?



Children have wellies in school. Try to ensure they know which ones are theirs! Maybe buy them together.



Practise taking shoes off and putting wellies on and vice versa.
Don't choose shoes with laces!



PSED— school readiness

If your child is having school dinners when they start school they need to be able to use a knife and fork and carry a tray. We will help them with cutting up their food but it may be worth encouraging a little independence with cutting soft food like fish fingers.



If your child brings a lunchbox, make sure they can open it, as well as any containers inside. We can help them opening packets and wrappings.



PSED— school readiness

Practise putting on school uniform independently. Children find putting on and taking off jumpers especially hard.

Don't worry too much about fiddly fastenings such as shirt buttons and zips. Socks and tights often require adult help too.



Teach your child tricks such as putting labels at the back, holding cuffs to stop sleeves riding up, and wrinkling tights and socks to put toes in first.

Another important skill is being able to turn clothes the right way round when they are inside out. And also practising leaving their clothes in a neatish pile once they have taken them off!

Can your child put on their own coat?

Could you show them how to do up the zip?



PSED— school readiness

Concern over using the toilet independently is one of the biggest issues parents ask us about.

Many children have the odd accident in school but it is very important that children starting school are able to use the toilet for a wee and a poo. If they are still having accidents regularly we will need to put a plan in place before they begin school.

Parents biggest concerns is that their child cannot wipe their own bottom. Please don't worry about this but you can make a start at home with acquiring the skill. Show them how to get a wad of toilet paper, not a single sheet and encourage lots of trying! "You wipe, I'll check" is a good way to get started.

Grab some paper plates, nutella and some toilet paper and get your child to practise wiping the Nutella off the paper plates so he or she can better understand how much toilet paper to use for each wipe, and how to tell when the job is done!

Chat about the importance of good handwashing with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet and before eating lunch.



PSED— school readiness

Other things that will help your child to make the most of the opportunities in Year R is to work on developing their resilience & stamina.

Keep on trying! Don't give up yet! Have one more go! Its OK to make mistakes!

Looking after each other, our school and the resources and keeping ourselves and each other safe are ideas that we impress upon the children early on. As soon as the children begin school we teach our 3 school rules; Ready (to listen and learn), Respect (for each other and school resources) and Safe.



We want the children to be able to follow simple instructions and understand right from wrong.

PSED— school readiness

Part of managing behaviour is knowing when to ask for help. We try to ensure that all the children learn very early on that they can ask a grown up for help if they are sad, hurt, having a disagreement or cannot manage to do something independently.



Throughout Year R we want children to work towards resolving friendship issues on their own but we make sure that they always tell an adult if they have been hurt accidentally or on purpose.

Please help your child to resolve friendship issues by reminding them to talk to the adults in school and never encourage them to hit back if they are hurt.

PSED— school readiness

With only 4 adults looking after 60 children in school it is also important for children to learn to wait for their turn or for attention. Please try to discourage your child from talking at you if you are having a conversation with someone else. Show them how to indicate that they are waiting to talk to you without tapping you or saying “excuse me” repeatedly!

Maybe if this is something your child struggles with you could try this...

“Next time I’m having a conversation, I wonder if you would like to put your hand on my arm, or maybe hold my hand so that I know you want to ask me something? This way, I will know you need me and as soon as I, or the other adult finishes talking, I can turn to you and find out what you need.”



PSED— school readiness

TIDY UP TIME!

I am sure you can imagine that, when all the children are playing together the classrooms can get pretty messy!

Tidy up time is a team effort in school and it is important that the children learn this very early on! Try to help them to understand the process of how to tidy by ensuring that they take some responsibility for putting their toys away, helping to clear the table, and folding their clothes (or at least making a small pile) in order to prepare them for doing these things at school.



Literacy 3-4 year old goals

Reading

Turn pages of a book

Spot and suggest rhymes

Hear when words begin with the same sound

Talk about books and stories, and learn the meaning of new words

Writing

Begin to do pretend writing, starting at the top of the page and mark make across the page (from Left to right)

Form **some** letters correctly

Communication and language

preschool focus

- to be confident speakers and be able to retell a recent event/experience
- to be able to ask and answer questions such as what, where and why
- repeat words and phrases from familiar books
- develop play around favourite stories
- to show an interest in stories
- beginning to develop a knowledge of letter sounds and rhyming words
- being able to follow a two-way conversation and continue it for many turns
- being able to listen and give attention to others for an age-appropriate time.
- able to follow a simple two part instruction using language to express their needs and wants

Literacy– school readiness

The importance of reading with children cannot be overstated. There is so much young children can learn from this simple and hugely enjoyable activity.

Sitting and focussing for a short while is a vital for starting school and storytime is a perfect opportunity to develop this skill so it becomes a habit.

During storytime children learn;

- To focus for a short period of time
- To handle a book and turn the pages – please encourage them to do this!
- New vocabulary they haven't encountered – make sure you try to explain what these words mean
- To begin to recognise how a story works
- To begin to join in with repeated refrains in a story like, “We’re going on a bear hunt!”
- To recognise rhymes in a story- when reading a familiar story try to pause before saying the rhyming word to give your child a chance to say it first.



Literacy— school readiness

Attention Please!

Minimise distractions by turning off TVs and music and ignoring phones and computers – especially during storytime.

Reading together

Research shows that children who are read to daily do better in all areas of learning. Don't limit reading to bedtime stories – magazines, websites, catalogues, signs and recipes all provide opportunities for reading and discussion all day long.

Discussions

When you read a story or watch a TV programme, ask them how the characters are feeling, and why.

Do you recall?

When you finish reading a book or watching a TV programme, ask your child if they can tell you what happened in the story.

What happened next?

Make up a joint story, where you say one sentence, your child gives the next, and you keep alternating.

Memory Games

Play games such as 'or 'I Went to the Shops and I Bought...' to boost memory as well as listening skills.

Think of a rhyme

Younger children love to listen to silly nursery rhymes created by altering the rhyming words of familiar nursery rhymes.

"Twinkle twinkle little snake,

How I wonder when you'll wake"

"Baa baa black sheep have you any eggs?

No sir, no sir, But I have some pegs."

Rhyming tennis

Agree on a rhyming family – say 'at' as in hat – and take turns around the players, back and forth, each saying a new word, (at, hat, bat, cat, sat)- these can be real or made up words.

Literacy— school readiness

One of the first things that we work on when beginning to teach reading to the children is encouraging them to begin to hear and say the pure sounds at the start of words.

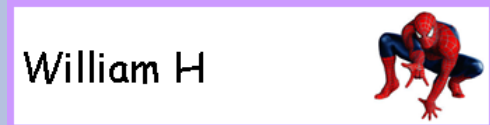
It is really important that you use the sounds a (animal), b (bus) NOT the letter names ay (ace), bee (bead.) Here are some games to help with this;

- I spy with my little eye.....
- Odd One Out- Begin by naming three items – two that are connected in some way and one that is not (and ask your children to choose the odd one out. For example “rabbit, fox, rat” or “ box, bowl, tin” the focus in the game is identifying different sounds.
- Tongue twisters- Make up your own funny tongue twisters by choosing a letter or sound and working together to make a sentence with as many words beginning with the chosen sound as possible.
- Sound tennis- Players agree on an initial sound or blend, say ‘P,’ and then take turns back and forth, each saying a new word that begins with that sound, until the round comes to a finish when one player cannot think of a new word beginning with the nominated sound.
- Alphabet chain- Choose a category and take turns naming an item that fits the category following the sequence of letters of the alphabet. So the first person chooses a word starting with a, the second person a word beginning with b, the third person with c, etc. The category can be anything at all – animals, names, superpowers, etc.

Literacy— school readiness

Another important skill that will help your child when they begin school is to be able to recognise own name when it is printed or written in lower case letters. (Capital letters are used only at the start.)

Children have their names written on their pegs, trays, water bottles, book bags, and jumpers so it really helps if they can recognise it when they see it.



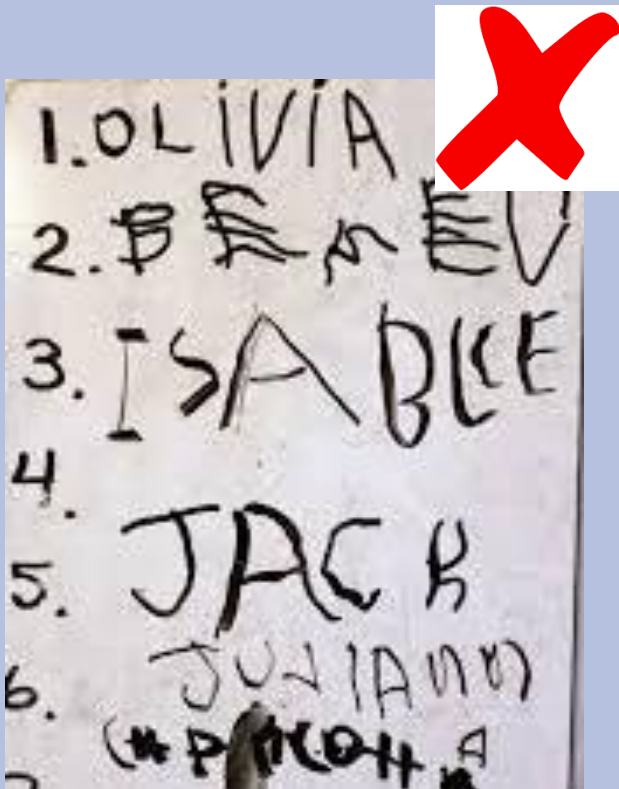
If you want to work on this please try to ensure it is NOT all written in capital letters. We want then to learn to recognise and associate the lower case letters as a familiar part of their name. This especially helps when they begin to learn to write their name.

Literacy— school readiness

We know that a lot of parents are keen for their child to be able to write their name before they start school- We are not!

In many ways if children start school writing their name incorrectly it causes more problems than if they hadn't begun at all. Some of the problems we have are;

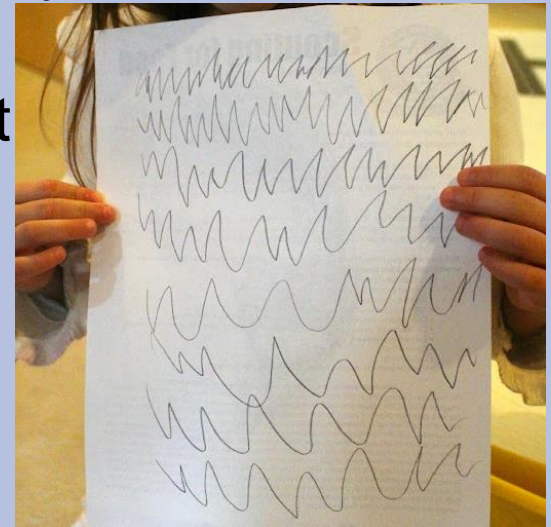
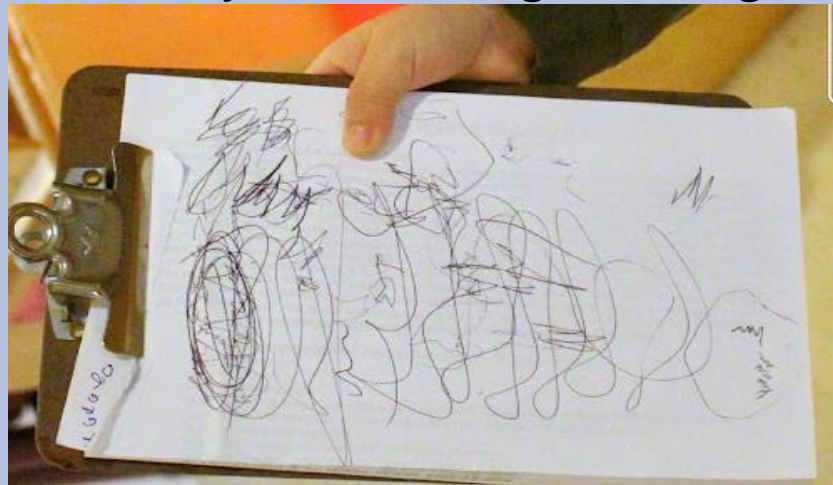
- * incorrect formation of lower case letters (a-ball and stick)
- * Mixture of all capital letters
- * Backwards formation or writing from right to left
- * Re-teaching a child to do a skill they think they have already mastered is demoralising and very time consuming.



Literacy— school readiness

Far more important than writing their name is having a go at and wanting to do pretend writing. This will help to develop fine motor skills, pencil grip, dominant hand, crossing the midline, as well as their imagination and composition skills. When young children scribble, they demonstrate how much they know about print, they show that they understand directionality. This child made her writing start in the top left, and she went across the paper to the right, and then started again on the next line.

We love it when our children start to make marks on bits of paper and in notebooks and then tell us they are taking the register, or inviting us to their parties.



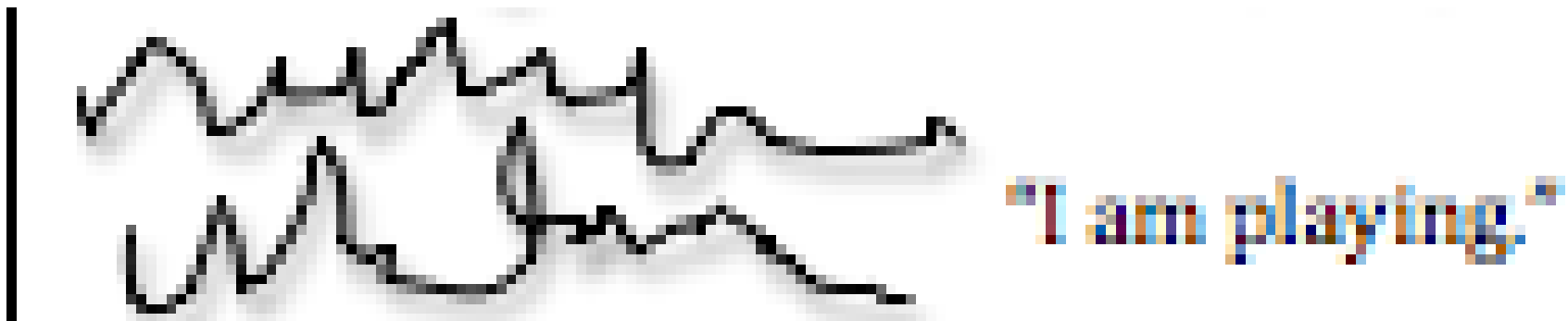
Learning to write is a developmental process. It goes through a series of stages that will eventually lead to writing sentences and stories in Year R.



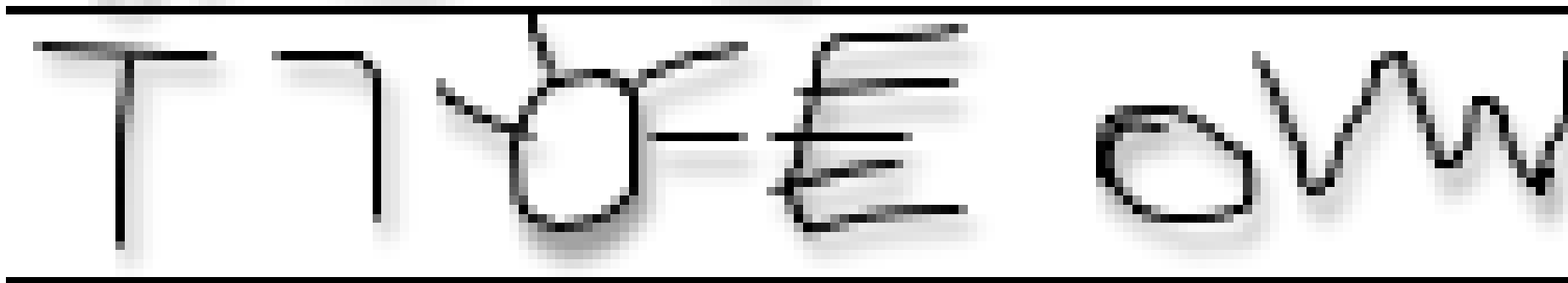
Pre Literate Scribble



Symbolic Scribble



Directional Scribble



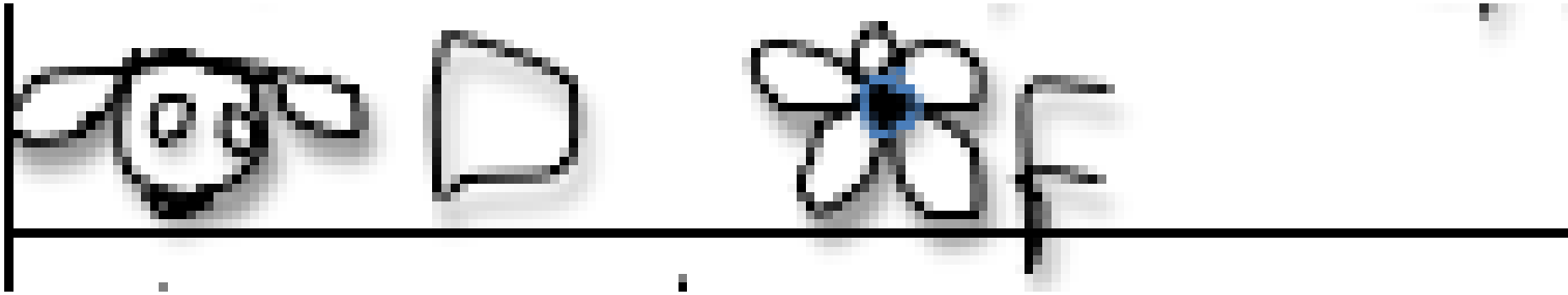
Symbolic Letters

TAHO 2F TX

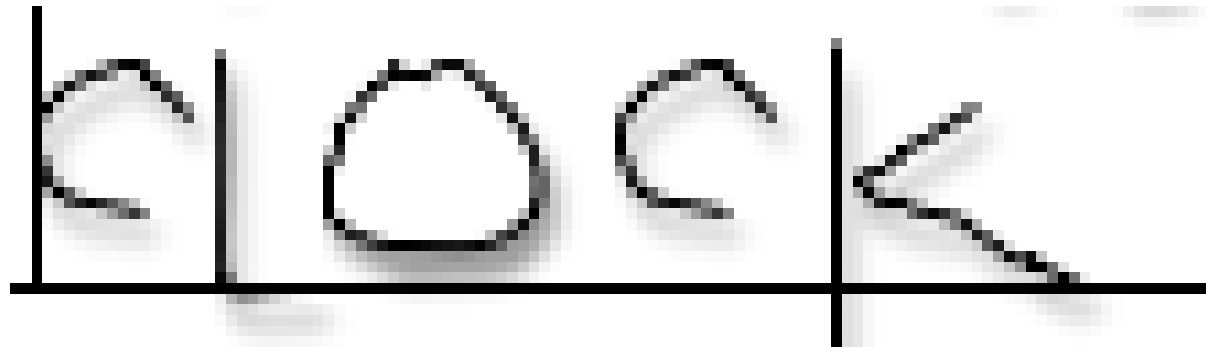
String of Letters

NI 20 T CA

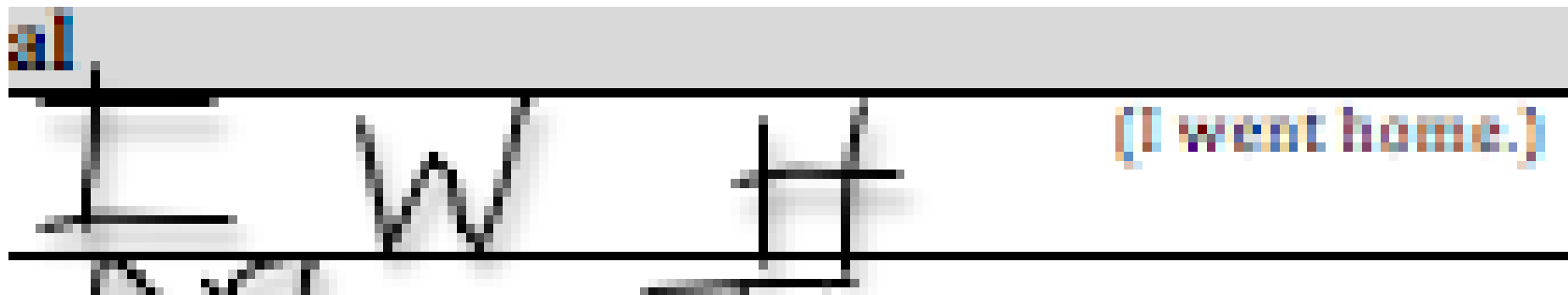
Groups of Letters



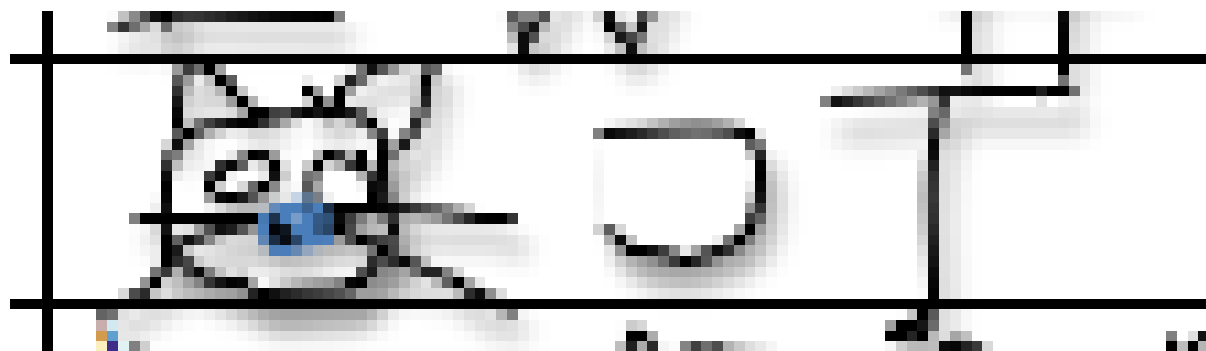
Phoneme Labels



Environmental Print



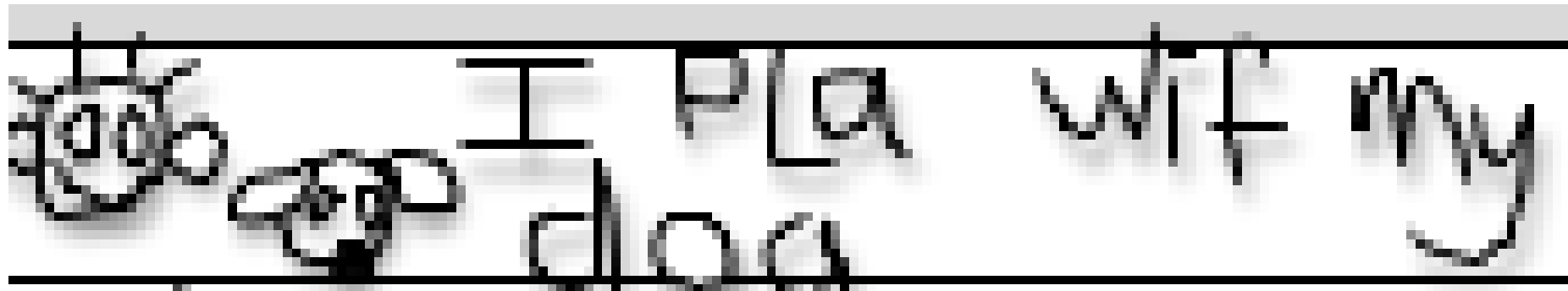
Initial Phoneme Recognition



Initial and Final Phoneme

MI CAT ɪz BɹN
(My cat is brown.)

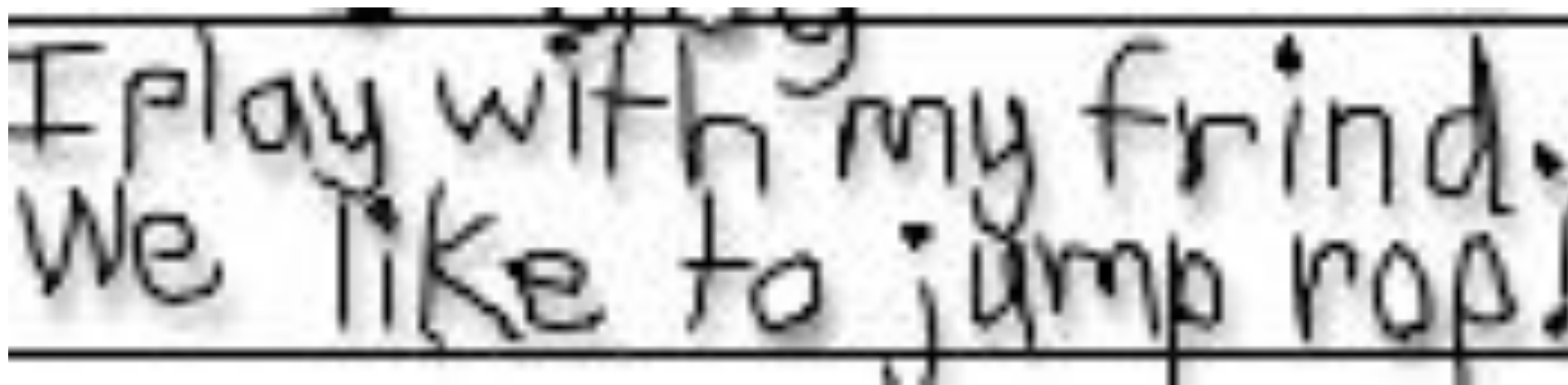
Medial Phoneme Recognition



I Pla wit my
doo

A handwritten sample on lined paper. The text 'I Pla wit my' is written on the top line, and 'doo' is on the bottom line. To the left of the text is a simple line drawing of a dog's head.

Beginning to use Phrases



I Play with my frind.
We like to jump rop!

A handwritten sample on lined paper showing two sentences. The first sentence 'I Play with my frind.' is on the top line, and the second sentence 'We like to jump rop!' is on the bottom line.

Sentences

Number 3-4 year old goals

Develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually

Say numbers in order (count out loud) past 5.

Show 'finger numbers' up to 5.

Recognise numeral up to 5, showing the right number of objects to match the numeral.

Know that the last number reached when counting a small set of objects tells you how many there are in total.

Compare quantities using language: 'more than', 'fewer than'.

Mathematics preschool focus

- Develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually
- Say numbers in order (count out loud) past 5.
- Show 'finger numbers' up to 5.
- Link numerals to amount up to 5
- Compare quantities using language: 'more than', 'fewer than'.

Number— school readiness

It may seem obvious but saying the numbers in the correct order or, counting out loud to 10 (and then beyond) is a really important skill.

Get into the habit of counting everything with your child, count the stairs as they go up and down, count how long it takes to put their shoes on, count down to tidy up time....saying the numbers in the right order forwards and backwards will help with all the other number activities.



Counting songs and rhymes teach children numbers and order, as well as rhythm and rhyme. 'One, Two, Buckle my Shoe', 'Five Little Ducks', 'Ten in the Bed'...

Number— school readiness

Once children can say numbers in the correct order they can then begin to understand that the number represents how many objects are in that group, and that the last number they say is the total. (We call this cardinality.) There are several useful skills to build on when counting objects.

1. Being able to count out a certain number from a bigger pile (up to 5 then 10) for instance, you may have a bunch of grapes and you tell your child they can pick 5 of them. Alternatively asking them to get out 4 forks from the drawer to set the table.

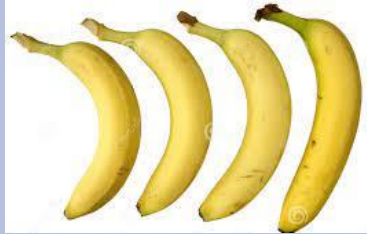


2. Being able to count how many objects are in the pile you have given them (up to 5 then 10) for example give your child a small pile of socks when sorting out the washing and ask them how many there are or ask how many bananas are on a bunch.



Number— school readiness

3. Strategies for accurate counting. It is also useful to model how to make sure you are counting accurately, not missing some objects out, or counting others twice!



A random pile is tricky to count so show your child how to put them in a line and tap each one in time as they say the numbers.

Another technique is to move the objects from one pile to another as they count them, this helps to ensure that none are left out, or counted twice.

4. Sharing out an amount, whether it is playing cards, sweets or toys to be tidied up will help with the concept of fractions and groups. Can they share out berries so everyone has the same amount?

5. Can they help with cutting up a pizza or an apple into halves and quarters? How many pieces did you start with? How many have you got now?



Number— school readiness



Fingers are really important so don't forget to use these to help demonstrate how to count. It's useful for children to know that they have 10 fingers altogether and 5 on each hand. Most school starters, when asked how old they are will hold up 4 fingers.



Recognising numerals 1-5 (then 10) would give the children a fabulous headstart in school although there is no expectation so don't panic if your child is way off.

Play 'spot the number' – focus on the numerals 0 to 9, and challenge your child to find them everywhere – on front doors, road signs, barcodes, price tags, clocks, car registrations, birthday cards and more. How many times can your child spot their age number in a day?

Look how the figures 0–9 are used on phones, calculators and remote controls.

Play counting-based games such as dominoes, ludo, snakes and ladders or number snap.

Shape, space and measures 3-4 year old goals

Talk about and explore 2D shapes (e.g. circles, rectangles, triangles) using the language: 'sides', 'corners'; 'straight', 'flat', 'round'.

Select shapes appropriately: flat surfaces for building, a triangular prism for a roof

Understand position words "The bag is under the table," 'in front of' and 'behind'.

Compare size, length, weight and capacity of objects

Talk about patterns around them. e.g. stripes on clothes, designs on rugs and wallpaper.

Make simple repeating patterns – stick, leaf, stick, leaf.

Talk about the order of events, real or fictional, using words such as 'first', 'then...'

Shape, space & measures preschool focus

- Complete simple puzzles
- Notice and finish patterns such as stripes on clothes, designs on rugs and wallpaper
- Compare comparisons between objects
- Relating size, length, weight and capacity
- Be able to use mathematical language
- Explore measurements including capacity, shape, time, money during play
- Use spatial words in play such as in, on, under, up, down
- Talk about and explore 2D shapes (e.g. circles, rectangles, triangles) using the language: 'sides', 'corners'; 'straight', 'flat', 'round'.
- Select shapes appropriately: flat surfaces for building
- Make simple repeating patterns – stick, leaf, stick, leaf.
- Talk about the order of events, real or fictional, using words such as 'first', 'then...'

Shape, space & measures— school readiness

There are lots of easy ways to introduce your child to the mathematical concepts they'll learn about at school. And remember to drop in the mathematical vocabulary throughout the day.... heavy, light, tall, short, long, fat, thin, empty, full, morning, afternoon.

PATTERN AND SEQUENCE

Can they make a repeated pattern with building blocks, or beads on a string? Have a look at patterns in brickwork, tiles and paving.



MEASURING

Compare the height of people in the family. Put the family's shoes in order biggest to smallest.

COMPARISONS

Can they guess which is heavier: a kitchen roll or a small tin of beans?

TIME

Play with a stopwatch or egg timer: can your child stand on one leg for one minute? How long does it take to run to the lamppost and back?



Shape, space & measures— school readiness

TRIP TO THE SUPERMARKET

At the supermarket, they could help you count apples into a bag, choose the biggest box of cornflakes, and talk about different shapes of items.

BAKING MUFFINS

Baking together involves recognising numbers in the recipe, weighing ingredients, counting eggs, measuring out oil or milk, dividing the mixture between paper cases and cooking at the right temperature and for the right amount of time.

PLAYING SHOP

This might mean making price labels, measuring feet, matching up pairs, taking money and giving change and a receipt

SHAPE HUNT

On a walk try to spot shapes in the environment. Being able to recognise and name a square, rectangle, circle and triangle would be a great skill to have when starting school as we will move onto learning about 3D shapes.

A note to end on.....

Whilst there has been a lot of information to take on board I wanted to finish by hopefully reassuring you that there is no expectation for your child to be able to do all of the suggestions and recommendations covered this evening.

Some of our school starters may be 4 and three quarters already whilst others are still only 3. It is our job to find out what their starting point is and move forward from that point.

If your child is joining us in September we very much look forward to welcoming them to Robins and Wrens classes.

Our Parents induction Evening for the September 2023 Year R cohort is on Thursday 8th June at 7pm and provides a lot of information and hopefully answers lots of questions about school life.

Starting school packs for children joining us are available at the school office.

DEAR TEACHER.

I know you're rather busy
First day back, there's just no time
A whole new class of little ones
And this one here is mine



I'm sure you have
things covered
And have done
this lots before
But my boy is
very little
He hasn't long
turned four

In his uniform this morning
He looked so tall and steady
But now beside your great big school
I'm not quite sure he's ready

Do you help them eat their lunch?
Are you quick to soothe their fears?
And if he falls and hurts his knee
Will someone dry his tears?

And what if no-one plays with him?
What if someone's mean?
What if two kids have a fight
And he's caught in between?

You're right, I have to leave now
It's time for him to go
I'm sure he'll learn so much from you
Things that I don't know

Yes, I'm sure they settle quickly
That he's fine now without me
I know he has to go to school
It's just so fast, you see

It seems like just a blink ago
I first held him in my arms
It's been my job to love, to teach
To keep him safe from harm

So, when I wave goodbye in a moment
And he turns to walk inside
Forgive me if I crumple
Into tears of loss and pride

I know as I give
him one more kiss
And watch him
walk away
That he'll never
again be
wholly mine
As he was
before today.

