

Some Important Areas of Early Learning

Developing Oral Language

It is important that your child's vocabulary and his/her ability to talk is as advanced as possible. It is through speech that children communicate their thoughts and feelings, their needs and desires, curiosity and wonder. If your child cannot express these in words he/she will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from the learning activity of the class. This can be the first sign of failure in the school system and must be remedied, if at all possible. This is why a lot of attention is given to language development in the first years of school.



You can help your child in a number of ways....

- Try to make time to listen when your child wants to tell you something that is important to him/her. But don't always make him/her the centre of attention. It is important for your child to develop listening skills and speaking skills.
- Answer questions with patience and in an adequate way. Always nurture her/his sense of curiosity and wonder.
- Introduce your child gently to the ideas of Who? What? Why? How? When? Where? If? etc. These demand more advanced language structures.
- Your child will have his/her own particular favourite stories that he/she never tires of hearing. Repeat them over and over again and gradually get him/her to re-tell them to you.

First steps in reading

The ability to read is the foundation for all future progress in our school system. However, learning to read is a gradual process and a lot of preparatory work must be done before a child is introduced to her/his first reader.

We deliberately do not rush or push children into reading. We get them ready for it over an extended period. Reading is something to be enjoyed. It should never start as a chore for the small child. Let your child see you reading and fill your child's life with a print rich environment.

- You can help your child in a number of ways....
- Read to your child as often as you can and make it a fun activity
- Have attractive colourful books in your home
- Reading aloud to your child will cultivate an interest in, and love of reading
- Read a variety of stories, including fables and fairy tales* as often as you can. Your child will get to associate these wonderful tales with books and reading
- Teach your child that books are precious things that must be handled carefully and put away safely (Show your child how to turn pages carefully)
- Look and talk about the pictures
- Ask your child to tell you their favourite character or favourite part of the story and why?
- Teach and recite nursery rhymes* with your child– they are very important in the process of reading



- Above all, don't push your child with early reading. You may turn him/her against it for evermore
- Remember that the class teacher is the best judge of what rate of progress is best suited to each child

Suggested Nursery Rhymes*

- ✓ Little Bo Peep
- ✓ Humpty Dumpty
- ✓ Doctor Foster
- ✓ Hey Diddle Diddle
- ✓ Jack and Jill
- ✓ Rub a Dub Dub
- ✓ Incy Wincy Spider
- ✓ Little Miss Muffet
- ✓ Baa, Baa, Black Sheep
- ✓ One, Two, Buckle My Shoe
- ✓ Three Blind Mice
- ✓ Hickory, Dickory, Dock



Suggested Fables and Fairytales*

- ✓ Cinderella
- ✓ Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
- ✓ The Princess and the Pea
- ✓ The Three Little Pigs
- ✓ Jack and the Beanstalk
- ✓ Little Riding Hood
- ✓ The Three Billy Goats Gruff
- ✓ The Little Red Hen
- ✓ The Ugly Duckling
- ✓ Puss in Boots
- ✓ The Gingerbread Man
- ✓ Sleeping Beauty
- ✓ Rapunzel
- ✓ Thumbelina



Gaeilge

All children enjoy learning another language besides their own language. They have no difficulty in picking it up because it fascinates them as another code of communication. They are free of any hang-ups about Irish unless they become aware that the home attitude towards it is not good. So please be careful that anything you say does not give a negative attitude to your child.



We would want his/her parents to give every encouragement and help to the small ones in their efforts to acquire Irish. If they learn new words in school encourage them to 'teach' you and to use them at home .

Use little Irish phrases or words now and again. Children are delighted to find out that their parents are into their new code as well. If they must learn Irish, let them enjoy it and master it to the best of

their ability. Use the simple words – Slán leat, Fáilte abhaile. At table – scian, spúnóg,. Use your cúpla focail!

First Steps in Writing

Good writing is all about muscle and motor control and hand-eye co-ordination. Finger muscles are only gradually developing at this stage so it will help your child greatly if he/she is practised at colouring, drawing, painting, cutting with a scissors, manipulating materials such as Play-Doh, blocks, Lego, sand, jigsaws etc.



Your child will be learning to write lower case letters initially so it would be very helpful if you could encourage this at home. Making letters on paper is not easy for the small child. He/she must learn to hold the pencil properly at an early stage and make regular shapes. Stick up your child's name on his/her bedroom door so that he/she can be familiar with its appearance. If he/she can be practised in writing it this is even better! Don't discourage left-handedness. If that is your child's definite natural inclination, don't attempt to change it.

Other Areas in the Curriculum

Children in junior infants learn a lot through many other activities, which do not need any elaboration here. Their general developments is enhanced through Visual Art, Drama, P.E., Music, Nature and through Religious Education.

Social Skills

Children's moral and social education is covered right through the school day e.g. kindness to others, sharing with them, saying we are sorry, being aware of God through the beauty of nature etc.

Do's

Do be kind and helpful

Do be gentle

Do listen

Do work hard

Do be honest

Do look after property

Don'ts

Don't hurt people's feelings

Don't hurt anyone

Don't interrupt

Don't waste your or other people's time

Don't cover up the truth

Don't waste or damage things

Social skills are very important. We encourage good manners at all times, please/thank you, addressing teachers properly, being courteous to fellow students and teachers. It is important to ask your child whom he/she played with at school and to ensure he/she isn't alone, also encourage mixing rather than being dependent on one friend.

Rough behaviour is totally discouraged in the playground.

