Activity Sheets for Parents and Carers

The National *Literacy* Strategy Activity Sheets for Parents and Carers

Notes for teachers and teaching assistants

Summary

- These activity sheets for parents and carers offer some ideas for practical activities. You may wish to use them as they are presented or to adapt them to suit your own circumstances
- The introductory pages explain the Activity Sheets they should be given out at the beginning of the programme.
- One Activity Sheet is to be given out at the <u>end</u> of each week for the children to take home.
- The aim is to involve parents and carers with their children in activities that will reinforce learning.
- The ELS programme does <u>not</u> rely on the children having completed activities at home.

A set of 12 Activity Sheets for parents and carers has been produced to support the work of the ELS programme. The Activity Sheets are designed to be given out to parents and carers at the <u>end</u> of each week of sessions. The emphasis throughout is on adults and children enjoying doing things together, to reinforce learning and build confidence, rather than homework to be completed before the next session. The children may make things at home to bring into school, but their participation and success in the ELS sessions is not dependent on what they are doing at home.

These activities do not involve the children in taking home materials from the sessions each day. They can all be done with things that families will have at home already, except for the Guided Reading book, or writing done in the ELS sessions, taken home each Friday. This means that the Take Away pack that the children have as part of the ELS sessions is just used to support independent activities in the Literacy Hour.

The pack starts with a set of introductory notes which explain how parents might use these ideas with their children. These notes could be given out at a parents' meeting, or at the end of the first week of sessions, with the first Activity Sheet.

Further support for parents and carers

Check the ELS section of the website www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy for further developments.

You may want to consider involving tutors working with your local Family Literacy Programme. The Activity Sheets could form the basis of workshops for parents where they receive advice and support in ways to help their children with literacy at home. Such sessions could also help parents who themselves have difficulties with aspects of reading or writing.

Early Literacy Support About the Activity Sheets

About the Activity Sheets

ACTIVITY SHEETS for Parents and Carers

Your child is part of a group having some extra sessions in school this term to help them take off with their reading and writing. At the end of every week they will bring home an activity sheet with ideas for activities that they can do with you at home. These activities are designed to help you support your child's literacy at home.

There are ideas for playing games, doing some reading and writing together, and doing or making things together. The ideas are linked to the things that your child has been learning in their 'Early Literacy Support' group during the week, but the activities are not exactly the same. It often helps children with their learning if they try things in different ways.

The most important thing is to enjoy doing these activities together. You do not have to do all the activities each week. Choose the things that seem to work best. Ask grandparents, big brothers and sisters, aunties and uncles to help. As you read and write, play games and make or do things with your child, you will help build up their confidence and practise the things they are learning at school. We are encouraging the children to learn the technical or 'grown-up' terms for talking about letters, sounds and words, so don't be surprised if they come out with terms like 'phoneme' (that means the sound made by letters), 'vowel', etc. We also encourage them to use the names of the letters as well as the sounds. We help them to remember how to form their letters properly by making up things for them to say when they are writing, so you might notice them talking to themselves about how to write letters!

There are four different types of activity on the sheets each week:

1 Games to play

Young children learn as they play, and word games are a good way to help children practise what they are learning about sounds, letters and spelling simple words. They often enjoy playing games over and over again, and this is a good way to help them become more confident.

As well as the ideas on the sheets you may have other games that you can play at home, e.g. simple card games like 'Snap' or 'Happy Families' or word games on the computer.

2 Reading together

Your child will bring books home from school regularly to share with you, and there will be advice on the sheets about things you can do to help them. But these are not the only books you can read together. Although your child will be beginning to read for themselves, don't forget that it is very important to carry on reading books to your child regularly.

Read favourite books together, encouraging your child to join in with the bits they know. Try reading longer stories, perhaps reading a chapter each night, or listening to taped stories together. Visit your local library together and look for new books to share. Don't just look for stories, look at information books on things that your child is interested in. If you are not sure what to choose you can talk to your child's teacher, or the librarian and they will be able to make suggestions.

Make sure your child sees people at home reading, e.g. newspapers, TV listings, instruction manuals. It will help them to understand that reading is something adults do as well as children. Let them help you with reading information and instructions on packets and tins, and when you are out and about, encourage them to look carefully at signs, posters and labels and pick out familiar letters and words.

3 Writing together

There will be ideas in the Activity Sheets for things to write about, but you could also think about other opportunities to encourage your child to write and to let them see you writing. Make lists together: e.g. when you are going shopping, let them help you make the list and have a go at writing their own; give your child a notebook for writing their own ideas and stories; write letters to other people in the family.

Don't worry too much about your child spelling every word correctly. They are gradually learning spelling patterns and rules and they need the confidence to have a go. Do encourage them to say words out loud and listen for the sounds. They will probably be able to identify the first sound and final sound, but might need help with the sounds in the middle of words.

If you are writing a word for your child, write it in small letters (not CAPITALS) and encourage your child to look carefully, cover up the word, try to remember it and then write it for themselves. Always encourage your child to read back what they have written, and praise their attempts at writing.

4 Things to make or do together

There are ideas each week which involve doing or making something. It may not feel as though these will teach your child about literacy, but the talking and listening that you are doing are a very important part of the learning process. You will be helping your child understand and follow instructions, helping them to become more confident in talking about what they are doing or asking questions, and helping them use their new reading and writing skills in many different ways.

The focus for this week was names.

Your child has been learning to identify sounds at the beginning of words and to read and write a simple sentence.

• A game to play together

Play 'I Spy', with different people's names.

Use the names in your family, characters in favourite books, people or characters from the TV.

Help your child to hear the first sound in the word.

'I spy with my little eye, someone beginning with ...'

(Try to say the sound of the letter, instead of using the letter name.)

Reading together

On Friday, your child will bring home a book they have read in school. Read it together, encouraging your child to point to the words as they read.

If your child gets stuck on a word, encourage them to look at the picture to give them a clue.

Give your child lots of praise when they manage to work out a word for themselves.

Writing together

Look at some photos together, around the house or in a photo album. Talk with your child about the names of the people they can see in the pictures.

Help your child make a label for a photo using the words they have been learning this week: 'My name is...'

Encourage your child to have a go at spelling each of the words. If they get stuck, they could look at the sentence they wrote to go with their own picture.

Help your child to identify the first sound in the person's name. They will probably need your help to spell the rest of the word.

Encourage your child to read back their sentence to check that it makes sense.

Tip: use a sticky note to write on, then it can be stuck under the photo that you were looking at together.

• Something to make or do

On Friday, your child will bring home a picture of themselves. Make a photo frame for the picture together.

Cut out the photo.

Cut out a piece of card, about 10cm wider than the photo (e.g. the back of a cereal packet).

Glue dry pasta shapes around the edge of the card.

When the glue is dry, paint the pasta.

Stick the photo in the middle of the frame.

The focus for this week was on things children do at the weekend.

Your child has been learning to identify initial letters in words and to read and write simple sentences starting 'I went to the ...'

A game to play together

Play 'Word Detectives'. First choose a letter. How many things can your child find beginning with that letter? You could write a list together. Your child could look for pictures or objects, or look for words beginning with the letter in books, newspapers, on packets and on signs and labels in the street and in shops. You can play this game over and over again using different letters.

• Reading Together

On Friday your child will bring home a 'lift-the-flap' book which they have made. Encourage them to read you the sentence they have written, and play guessing the final word before they uncover it. You could copy out the sentence, cut it into words and let your child try to sort them into the right order.

• Writing together

Talk together about something else that you have done at home at the weekend or during the holidays. Your child could draw a picture and then you could help them write a simple sentence to go under the picture: 'I went to the ...'. Encourage your child to have a go at spelling 'went' by themselves, and to read back what they have written to check it makes sense.

• Something to make or do

Start a scrapbook, or make a picture for the wall with a collection of pictures or mementoes from a day out or a special occasion at home, e.g. going to the cinema. You could keep the ticket, popcorn packet, or cut out a picture from the newspaper advertising the film you saw. Talk to your child about what they saw and which part they liked best. This might encourage your child to write more about what they have done. You could add further pages to help remember other outings or events.

WEEK 2

The focus for this week was the story of Goldilocks.

Your child has been learning to identify sounds at the ends of words and to read and write simple sentences linked to the story.

• A game to play together

Try a more difficult version of 'I Spy', where you try to guess words ending in a particular letter. Your child might need some help, so start with easy words. When they make a guess, help them say the word slowly and identify the letter at the end, checking whether it is the same as the letter in your clue.

For example: 'I spy with my little eye something that ends with 'p' ' (say the sound, not the letter name). Child guesses 'plate'. Help them say the word and hear the 't' sound at the end. Get them to guess again.

Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home a book. Look at the front cover first and talk about what happens in the book. Then let your child read the book, checking that they point to each word as they read. If they get stuck, encourage them to go back to the beginning of the sentence, or look at the picture or the first letter of the word. Help them check that what they are reading makes sense.

You could also look at home to see whether you have a copy of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', or borrow one from the library. Read it with your child and talk about whether it is the same as the one they read at school. Ask which one they liked best.

Writing together

Your child has been learning to write 'This is a ...'. Encourage them to write more sentences like this. For example, they could draw pictures of some of the story characters and write labels: 'This is Goldilocks.' 'This is the baby bear.'

Encourage them to write 'this' and 'is' by themselves, to look in the book for the spellings of other names, to say the word and identify the sounds that they can hear.

Encourage them to leave a space between each word and to read back what they have written.

Something to make or do

Have a go at telling the story of Goldilocks together. You could make up a funny version of the story. This doesn't have to be written down, you could just tell it together. You could think of a new ending, or change the characters. It could be your child in the story instead of Goldilocks. Encourage your child to use their imagination!

The focus for this week was on making up a new verse for the song 'Five Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day'.

Your child has been learning to identify more sounds at the ends of words and to read and write words from the song.

• A game to play together

Help your child to learn about rhyming words. Say nursery rhymes together, and miss out a rhyming word for your child to try to guess, e.g. 'Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great ...'.

Say the rhyme again and let your child make up new rhyming words to fill in the gaps, making it into a nonsense rhyme. 'Humpty Dumpty sat on the chair, Humpty Dumpty had a great fair / bear / hair.'

Encourage them to carry on a string of rhyming words that you start, e.g. 'wall, fall, tall, call, ball ...'.

• Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home a song sheet with a new verse for the song that they have made up. Encourage your child to read or sing the verse to you and help them to use the picture, the initial letter of the word, or to go back to the beginning of the line to re-read if they get stuck. Praise your child for any of these actions and say 'That is what a good reader does.'

Ask your child about the new character in the song they have written (it is the name of the puppet who comes to their group each day!). They may be able to tell you what it is like and some of the things it does.

• Writing together

Your child could write more verses for their new version of the song. Help them to come up with the ideas by singing or saying the new version first, and then trying to write. They may need quite a lot of help with the spellings, but they should be able to have a go at 'went', 'day', 'away' and 'said'. Encourage them to sing their whole song through to you, and help them to check that it makes sense.

• Something to make or do

Encourage your child to teach you to sing 'Five Little Ducks'. Sing or read other rhyming songs together, e.g. 'Ten Green Bottles', 'Five Currant Buns'. If you know actions to go with the songs, do them together to help your child to remember the words. Your child will love learning songs that you used to sing when you were little. You may know songs in other languages that you can sing.

If you need more ideas, visit the library and look for books with counting rhymes or songs.

The focus for this week was on making up a question and an answer.

Your child has been learning to identify the sounds in the middle of threeletter words and to read and write words in a simple question and answer.

• A game to play together

Play 'Is it an 'o' or an 'a'?'. This game will help your child to listen to the middle sound in short words, and decide which letter to write. Say a word with a short 'o' (as in 'hot', 'box', 'dog') or 'a' (as in 'cat', 'man, 'pan'). Your child will need a piece of paper and a pencil. They write down the middle letter and show it to you. You may need to help them stretch the word out, saying each sound, and help them to hear the sound in the middle.

Reading together

On Friday your child will bring a book home. Read the title together, look at the cover and talk about the pictures. Ask your child 'What is the book about?' before they start reading. As they read, encourage them to 'point with their eyes' and only use their finger when they are stuck on a word. Help them to use initial letters, pictures, and re-reading the sentence as strategies to help when they are stuck. Praise them for remembering to use these. Talk about any words or phrases that were repeated in the text.

Writing Together

Look with your child at the 'lift-the-flap' card that they brought home on Friday. Read the guestion and answer together. Make up a new guestion and answer together using the same pattern. For example: 'Mum, Mum, what do you hear?' 'I hear a little boy whispering in my ear.' You could write the question and your child could write the answer. Your child should be able to help spell 'what', 'you' and 'my'. Remind them to leave spaces between each word and to read back what they have written. You could make up more questions and answers using different people in the family.

Something to make or do

Play a guessing game together to help your child understand about questions and answers. You could make up your own version of 'Who wants to be a Millionaire?'! Or you could play a version of '20 Questions'. You think of a famous person, book or TV character. Your child has to ask 20 questions to try to work out who it is, but you can only answer 'yes' or 'no'.

The focus for this week was on following instructions to make a sandwich.

Your child has been learning to identify more sounds in the middle of words, and reading and writing simple instructions.

• A game to play together

Play 'Simon Says'. This game involves listening carefully to follow instructions. Everyone in the family can join in! Give an instruction for the children to follow, e.g. 'Simon says clap your hands.' Keep changing the instruction, but the children must only do it if **Simon** says so. Try to catch them out by changing the instructions quickly.

• Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home an instruction sheet for making a jam sandwich. Encourage them to read each step of the instructions. If they get stuck, help them to think about what would make sense, and then to check whether the word looks right by looking at the initial sound, the final sound and then the whole word. You could use the instructions to make a jam sandwich together.

• Writing together

Think about something else that you could write instructions for together. It could be something your child really likes to eat or drink, or instructions for playing a favourite game or doing a job like feeding the dog. Talk together about what you need to do and think about the title, the list of things to use, and each step of the instructions. You may need to share the writing for this, but your child should be able to spell 'make', 'put', 'on' and 'the'. When you have finished writing, try out your instructions together to make sure that you have remembered everything.

• Something to make or do

Think of other things that you could do together where you need to read instructions and follow what they say, e.g. make a model from a kit; play a board game; use a recipe when you are cooking; follow instructions on food packets. Show your child the instructions you are using, and see if they can find the list of things you need. They may be able to tell you what to do by using the pictures.

The focus for this week was on labels and signs.

Your child has been learning to identify more sounds in the middle of words, and to read and write simple signs, labels and captions.

• A game to play together

Play 'Is it an 'i' or a 'u'?'. This is the same game as in Week 5, but uses two different sounds. Say a word with a short 'i' (as in 'bit', 'tin', 'sit') or 'u' (as in 'cup', 'mud', 'hut'). Your child will need a piece of paper and a pencil. They write down the middle letter and show it to you. You may need to help them stretch the word out, saying each sound, and help them to hear the sound in the middle.

Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home a book to read with you. It will probably be a non-fiction book. Before they read, talk about the title and the cover. Ask your child about the differences between storybooks and non-fiction. As they are reading, encourage them to work out words they are unsure of for themselves. They do this by looking at the initial and final letters, re-reading the sentence to see what would make sense, and using the pictures. Talk about what they have found out from reading the book.

Writing together

Your child has been learning about signs and labels. You could make a label together to use at home, e.g. for your child's bedroom door. Talk about how to make the label easy to read by using large letters and colouring it in. You could help your child use a stencil. If you have a computer, you could make a sign on the computer and print it out.

Help your child to think about what they want the label to say before they start to write, and give them a chance to write it 'in rough' before they make the label. They will probably need quite a lot of help with the spellings.

Something to make or do

Go for a walk and see how many different signs and labels you can see. Read them together and talk about what they are for. You might see: street names, road signs, notices on lamp posts about lost cats, advertisements, parking signs, number plates, bus stops, etc.

The focus for this week was on telling and writing simple stories.

Your child has been learning how to spell words with three or four letters and how to write two sentences in a story.

• A game to play together

Your child has been learning the five vowels over the last few weeks. Last week they

brought home a sheet with the 'Vowel Rap'. If they are not sure of the vowels, help them to say the Vowel Rap with you (use the short sounds for the letters). Play 'Which Vowel?'. Say a short word, and ask your child to decide which vowel is in the middle of the word. They can point to the correct letter on the Vowel Rap sheet.

Use words like: 'cat', 'red', 'tin', 'shop', 'mud', 'dad', 'met', 'chin', 'hot', 'run'. See how quickly your child can find the vowel.

Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home a 'zigzag' book with a little story about themselves. Encourage them to read you what they have written. Look for other stories to read together, and talk about where the story takes place each time. Look carefully at the pictures - is the setting like 'real life' or is it an imaginary place?

What sort of stories does your child prefer - imaginary or real-life settings? Talk about what they like and why.

• Writing together

When you have made up a story together (see below), have a go at writing it down. You could share the writing, perhaps taking it in turns to write a sentence each. Your child might find it easier to draw pictures for the story you told together before they try to write it down. You could fold A4 paper in half to make a little book, or use an old notebook. Encourage your child to have a go at spelling words correctly, and to write in whole sentences with capital letters and full stops. Help them to think about the sequence of the story by asking what happened first, what happened next, and what happened in the end.

• Something to make or do

Make up a story with your child as the main character, based on one of their favourites. This could be a book that they enjoy, or take an idea from a favourite film or TV programme. Tell the story together, thinking of ideas for funny or incredible things that could happen. You could tell the story first, and then your child could tell it back to you. This will help them to get the idea of a story sequence, and help them to make up ideas for their own stories.

The focus for this week was on reading and writing information

Your child has been learning to spell words with two consonants at the beginning, and about how information books are written.

• A game to play together

Play a memory game, where you take it in turns to add an item to a list, and have to remember all the things on the list. For example: 'I went to the pet shop and I bought a dog.' The next person thinks of a new animal to add to the list: 'I went to the pet shop and I bought a dog and a goldfish.' Keep going for as long as you can!

Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home an information book. Encourage your child to read it as independently as possible, but offer help if they get stuck. Praise them when they have a go at a word. After reading, ask your child to tell you something that they have found out.

Think about other things that your child is interested in. You could go to the library and look for books on that subject to read together. Look out for the contents page, index, headings, pictures or diagrams and facts about the subject.

Writing together

Your child has been reading and writing about different baby animals during the week. Talk about their favourite animal, and get them to draw a picture. Your child could write some facts about the animal, as though they were writing an information book. Encourage them to think about what they want to write before they start, and to think of more than one sentence, e.g. 'This is a guinea pig. It has brown and white fur. It likes to eat...'.

See how many words they can have a go at spelling without your help. Remind your child to use capital letters and full stops for each sentence. Ask them to show you where each sentence starts and finishes.

• Something to make or do

Make a simple animal puppet.

You will need: an old sock; two old buttons for eyes; wool, material scraps or cotton wool; strong glue.

Try to find a picture of your child's favourite animal together. Talk about what you could use to make the sock look like the animal. Work together and talk about what you are doing, e.g. 'What colour is its fur? Have we got some material that colour? Where shall we stick the eyes?'

The focus for this week was on rhyming sentences.

Your child has been learning how to spell more words with two consonants at the beginning, and how to make up new sentences that rhyme.

• A game to play together

Play 'Hangman'. Choose a word and draw spaces for each letter. Your child has to guess one letter at a time to make the whole word. If they guess a letter that is not in the word, you draw a piece of the gallows! If they guess a letter that is in the word, write it into the correct space.

Try to choose simple words with four letters (these are the sort of words the children have been working on in school), e.g. 'snow', 'clap', 'from', 'slip'.

• Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home a 'luggage label' with their own simple rhyming sentences written on it. Listen to them read the rhyme and praise them for reading it fluently. If they get stuck on words encourage them to use different strategies: look at the letters at the beginning and end and think about the sounds; read on or try the whole line again; think about what would make sense. Find a book of nursery rhymes or poems, or a story with rhyming sentences. Read it together and encourage your child to listen out for the rhyming words.

• Writing together

Write some new words together for your child's favourite pop song, or other songs that you enjoy listening to or singing at home (see below). Your child may need quite a lot of help with the spellings, but encourage them to have a go at sounding out words and writing down the letters that they know.

Something to make or do

Songs often have rhymes. Listen to some songs together on tapes / CDs or the radio. If you would rather sing children's songs, you could look in the library for tapes or videos with nursery rhymes and other action songs. Which songs does your child like best? Do they know the words so they can sing along with the music?

If you have any musical instruments at home, your child could have a go at playing some music to go with the song. You could make a simple shaker by putting some dried beans or lentils into an old yoghurt pot or margarine tub with a lid.



WEEK

ACTIVITY SHEETS for Parents and Carers

The focus for this week was dictionaries.

Your child has been learning to read and spell words with two consonants at the end and how to use a simple dictionary.

• A game to play together

Play 'Dictionary Race'. You will need a dictionary at home for this game. If you haven't got one, you may be able to borrow a simple dictionary from school for the weekend.

Think of a word (try to think of one that your child will be able to spell). Ask your child to try to find it in the dictionary. You could try playing this game against the clock. How many seconds or minutes do they take? Can they beat their last time? You could help your child think about the first letter and which part of the alphabet it is in, e.g. 'a' at the beginning of the dictionary, 'm' in the middle, 'w' at the end.

Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home a book to read with you. It will probably be a simple dictionary on a particular subject (e.g. a dictionary of animals). Talk with your child about what sort of book it is, and how it is different from other books. You could play a game with the book, rather than reading it all the way through. Ask, for example: 'Can you find a word beginning with 'c'?', and then read the definition together.

Writing together

Make an alphabet chart together. Think of a subject, such as food, animals, or TV and film characters, and try to think of something beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Help your child to write the word, and encourage them to think of a simple sentence to go with the word that gives a little bit of information. The sentence could be something like 'This is ... It is / it has ...' Your child should be able to spell 'this', 'is' and 'it'. Encourage them to use the dictionary to help them spell other words.

Something to make or do

Collect or draw pictures to go with the alphabet chart that you have been writing together. It could be made into a poster for the wall if you have got a big sheet of paper, or you could join together small pieces of paper to make a frieze for the wall.

The focus for this week was fairy stories: the story of Cinderella

Your child has been learning how to read and spell more words with two consonants at the end, and how to write their own version of a fairy story.

• A game to play together

Play 'Hangman' again (where you choose a word and draw spaces for each letter). Your child then has to guess one letter at a time to make the whole word. If they guess a letter that is not in the word, you draw a piece of the gallows! If they guess a letter that is in the word, write it into the correct space.

Try to choose simple words with four letters (these are the sort of words the children have been working on in school). Try to think of words that have two consonants at the end, e.g. 'nest', 'belt', 'help', 'lamp', 'next', 'soft'.

Reading together

On Friday your child will bring home a 'zigzag' book that they have made, with their own version of the story of Cinderella. Let them read their story to you, and encourage them to have a go at working out words they are not sure of. You could suggest that they think about what would look right and make sense; go back and try the sentence again; sound out the word, looking particularly at the letters at the beginning and end of the words.

• Writing together

Talk with your child about other fairy stories that they know well. Which one is their favourite? Encourage them to tell you the story by asking what happens in the beginning, in the middle, and how it ends. They could have a go at writing their own simple version of the story. They might find it easier to draw some pictures first, and then write sentences to go with the pictures. Encourage them to try as many words as they can by themselves, and to read back their sentences, checking that they make sense. Your child should be able to spell 'once', 'time', 'lived' and 'after'.

• Something to make or Do

Borrow a film version of a well-known fairy story and watch it together, e.g. Walt Disney's Cinderella, or Snow White or Beauty and the Beast. You could talk about whether it is the same as story versions that they have read; which bits are the same and which bits are different from the book.

