

Pre-Primary Spelling Homework 2017

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Your child has been developing their skills in Phonological Awareness (the awareness of sounds in words) and Alphabet Knowledge (knowledge of letters and their sounds). Now that they are in Pre-primary, they are ready to start putting these skills into practise! They are ready to begin the exciting journey of becoming successful readers and spellers!

The first step to success is to be able to segment (break apart) the sounds they hear in simple words and choose the appropriate letters to make those sounds. Our Pre-primary homework program will be focused on consolidating the skills your child has learnt at school.

Your child has been developing their reading and spelling skills by learning to:

- Segment the sounds they hear in a word (eg. 'cat' I can hear c – a – t).
- Map the sound that they hear with the appropriate letter choice.
- Blend the sounds that they map to form a word (eg. b – a – t, bat!)

At school your child will be practising sounding out and spelling words appropriate to his or her ability level. Your child will be sent home a **sound bag** of coloured letters with a corresponding **parent list**. The letters in their sound bag are the letters they will be using to spell and read words at home. The parent list is a list of words that can be made from those letters. They can practise spelling these words by listening to the word you call out and then choosing the appropriate letters to make that word.

Your first set of letters will be s, a, t, i, m.

To help consolidate your child's spelling skills, here are some steps to follow:

1. **Lay out the letters from your child's sound bag.** Revise the name and sound of each letter. Then practise saying just the sound of each letter as you tap them. Work on increasing the speed of recall once your child is confident at recalling the sounds.
2. **Call a word from the parent list** (do not show your child the parent list). Your child will listen to the word and then segment the sounds they hear eg. if you called the word 'mat' your child will be trying to segment 'm-a-t' out loud. Some children find it helpful to segment the sounds using their fingers. If your child is finding that task challenging, you can assist them by saying the word slowly for them or exaggerating the sounds in the word.

3. **Your child can then find the letters they need to spell that word and lay them out in order.** Have your child read the word from left-to-right pointing to the letters and saying each letter **sound**. Then they can blend the sounds together eg. 'm-a-t, mat) You should aim to practise for about 10-15 minutes, 5 times per week. You do not need to practise every word on the list every day.
4. **Your child will need to bring their sound bag of letters to school in his or her homework folder every Friday.** This is so your child's teacher can check on their progress and add new letters when your child is ready.

Your child will be observed over the course of each fortnight to check how they are progressing with their reading and spelling. When your child demonstrates mastery of spelling simple words using the first phase of letters and sounds, they will receive the next phase of letter tiles to be cut out and added to their sound bag.

Important: This homework requires adult assistance. To be of the most value to your child's learning, the words need to be **heard** and not seen before they spell it. They are not practising the essential skills required to spell if they are copying the words from the list. Our goal is to develop the skills required to become successful spellers of limitless words; not to 'memorise' a limited number of words list-by-list.

Please note: As at this age children do not yet have well-developed letter formation skills, it is best that they make the word out of the coloured letters and do not write them yet. This is primarily so that children can focus on spelling rather than handwriting, as well as to avoid practising incorrect letter formation. Once our handwriting program has commenced we will provide homework that includes writing some words.

If your child is feeling challenged:

Focus on practising recalling the name and the sound of their letters, and attempt words with only two sounds to begin with (at, it, am etc). Your child can keep practising with the group of letters they are up to for as long as they need to achieve mastery. With consistent guided practise at school and home they will master these skills when they are ready.

If your child is excelling:

The next step to mastering spelling their words is deleting and manipulating the sounds in words. (eg. your child has just spelt the word 'snap'. Ask them to make it spell snip, slip, etc. What if you take away the 'n', what does it spell now? What if you swap the 'a' for and 'o', what does it spell now?) These activities build automaticity and a high level of phonemic awareness in your child. You could also try increasing the complexity of the words you are calling for them (you do not have to be limited by the list provided).

Be patient:

Many students will excel with the first one or two sets of letters. Our program has been designed this way to ensure your children experience success and gain confidence in their abilities. It is always beneficial to ensure basic skills are achieved before moving on to ensure no gaps are left that might be detrimental to future learning. Be assured that this practise is still valuable and that the difficulty of the program will increase when it is appropriate to your child. If your child is working at a significantly different level to his or her peers they will be working towards adjusted learning goals on a specialised education plan designed by the classroom teacher. Your classroom teacher will be happy to discuss any concerns you have regarding our homework program.

We are always happy to have a chat about progress or to schedule an appointment at a more convenient time. We thank you for your collaboration and look forward to working in partnership with you!

The Kindy and Pre-Primary Team

Miss Arbuckle, Mrs McCarthy, Mrs Griffiths