

PSS Early Writing Activity Ideas for Parents/Carers

Pupil and School Support (PSS) are qualified teachers who support children and young people in educational settings who have learning difficulties.

These leaflets have been created to offer suggestions for support to parents and carers during the COVID-19 crisis.

Helping your child with their early writing involves learning to make marks on paper or in sand & paint, hearing sounds in words and starting to understand that we write for different reasons.

Learning to spell:

Using post-it notes and a range of writing tools, ask your child to label things around the house.



Put post-it notes on the fridge and ask your child to help you with recording shopping lists and recipes – allow them to make marks/draw alongside you as you model writing a real list. (They will create a 'pretend' list that cannot be read, but that is to be expected at this stage).

Let them trace over the top of letters you have written.

Point out shapes in the house and try to draw them together (be encouraging).

Draw around kitchen utensils e.g. plates, cups, cutlery

Write down things children say and read it back to them, to support their developing understanding that what they say can be written down and then read and understood by someone else.

Explore with mark-making outside and have fun getting messy. Try using water on paintbrushes to make marks on the floor or walls in the garden.

Work with your child on picking out letters they recognise in magazines and books.

Play games like Simon Says and I Spy sounding out the three letter words 'Simon says s-i-t'

Use plasticine / play dough to roll out & shape into letters.

Handwriting:

Take walks around your environment – look at, read and talk about the shapes, patterns, lines, words and images you see.



Point out shapes in the house and try to draw them together (be encouraging).

Squeezing activities:

Let them move water from bowl to bowl with a sponge.

Provide play dough/pastry

Squeeze a small ball or bean bag.

Practise holding knives, forks, spoons and writing utensils in their dominant hand and try to develop strength and control when using these implements.



Encourage them to develop their hand control by doing their own buttons, threading beads or keys onto string, and picking up coins from the floor.

Get a big roll of old wallpaper, roll it out on the ground and secure the corners with something heavy. Experiment with different ways to make marks on the paper;

Using paints, crayons, felt tips, pens, pencils, finger paints etc.

Write letters on the floor with chalk. Ask your child to try to wash it off (with water and a paintbrush), encourage them to trace over the shape of the letter.

Don't forget to bring out some wipes to help clean yourselves up afterwards... and a camera to record your creation!

If they are ready...

Encourage your child to prepare for writing by checking they have the 3 P's correct before writing;

- ✓ Posture- sitting up, with their feet flat on the floor and close to the table.
- ✓ Pen hold - a comfortable and correct grip between thumb and forefinger.
- ✓ Paper position – turned on an angle and held with their free hand.



Encourage them to try to hold a pencil between their thumb and forefinger.

When they write show them where to start writing (on the left-hand side).

PSS Early Reading Activity Ideas for Parents/Carers

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Children need to have a good understanding of early reading. Helping your child with their reading in the early years, involves sharing stories, helping them to recognise logos and encouraging them to point at words and pictures in books. They should also start to understand how to spot sounds that letters make.

Reading together:

Share books with your children and point at words as you talk about pictures



Use bedtime stories to model and show them the connection between words on the page and what we say – point at each word as you read to show the connection

Use of ICT and apps to listen to stories and to label pictures and objects using words

Singing and reading nursery rhymes to develop language and vocabulary skills

Make family books using small photo albums with photos of family members, significant people in the child's life, familiar everyday objects and then add labels or dates to the photos and talk about them. Point to the word and say it out loud so they know that you are reading.

Phonics (sounds that they can hear in words):

A useful guide for parents is available at <https://www.readwithphonics.com/parents-phonics-guide>

Play games during routine home activities e.g. putting food on plates, 'I think I am going to eat my ch- i- p-s or my p-ea-s'

Play I spy in the house or the garden, use real objects and encourage your child to listen to the first sound in the word with you

Use magnetic / paper letters and letter groups to make simple words like d-o-g, l-o-g, b-e-d, r-ai-n, b-ea-d

Take pictures of objects / toys, print them and attach to tidy boxes. When tidying up encourage your child to identify a picture on the box and organise their toys. Talk to your child about this i.e. saying 'Look this box has a picture of a car on, cars go in here, put your cars in here.'



Put pictures (with words if possible) on doors and when you put things away say, 'The socks go in here.'

Re-read books so that they become familiar and children can join in with completing a line e.g. Adult: "Each peach pear plum I spy Tom..." Child: "Thumb"

Share books with repetitive language, including rhyming words, comment on them "A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark wood, a fox saw a mouse and the mouse looked good....wood, good, they rhyme!"

Understanding stories:

Let your child see you reading. This could be:

Books/magazines, using a laptop/tablet/PC

Signs and notices that you have around the house

Brand names and information on food packets or products in the cupboard

Share stories every day. Read a book or tell a story from your childhood or things you have done in the day.

Sing songs and nursery rhymes you remember from when you were a child. Encourage them to join in with actions or repeated rhymes and phrases

Play rhyming songs from the internet (YouTube or Spotify)

Websites for games and resources:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1-games.html>

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/children/issues/phonics-for-parents/?region=uk>

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>

<https://www.phonicsbloom.com/>

<http://www.galacticphonics.com/>

<https://www.readwithphonics.com/>