

## *Essential literacy skills for beginning readers and writers*

*To work with written English, children need:*

### **1. Vocabulary knowledge**

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- To use oral language effectively – pronounce words, form sentences, explain ideas, respond to prompts and questions, formulate questions
- To expand their spoken vocabularies and their use of words to communicate in different situations

### **2. Phonemic Awareness skills**

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- To pronounce sounds correctly
- To identify sounds in different positions in words
- To link sounds to spoken words
- To recognise sounds and sound patterns in words (common sounds, syllables, rhyme)
- To blend 2, 3 and 4 sounds together to make words
- To segment words made up of 2, 3 and 4 sounds into individual sounds

### **3. Alphabetic code knowledge**

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- To understand that words are made up of sounds
- To understand that sounds can be written using letters of the alphabet
- To understand that one or more letters can represent a sound
- To understand that one sound can be written in different ways (to know that there is diversity in the way the code works)
- To know how to write EVERY sound of English one way, but to know that there might be other options
- To recognise common graphemes (letters and spelling patterns) when reading and to try pronouncing them
- To understand that one letter or spelling pattern can be pronounced in different ways (to know that there is diversity in the way the code works)
- To learn to decode words by pronouncing graphemes in sequence, from left to right through the word, and blending the sounds together

## *Essential skills for teachers of beginning readers and writers*

*To help children get print on and off the page, teachers need:*

- To recognise every sound of English and pronounce each one correctly
- To blend sounds together to make words
- To break words into the correct number of sounds
- To recognise graphemes in words
- To know the difference between digraphs and blends
- To be familiar with the diverse ways that sounds can be written and graphemes can be pronounced
- To know some common, simple spelling rules and conventions that will help young children discover there is a system to spelling English
- To show children how to decode words – by recognising and pronouncing graphemes from left to right through a word and blending the sounds together