

# Stellar Home Language

Supporting early language and literacy teaching in Grade R

## Teacher's Guide for parent meetings

Introducing the Stellar programme to parents of Grade R learners



All children deserve the ability to reach their potentials. We must begin to recognise that ultimate achievement begins on the first day of life and that parents must be recognised as the critical factor.

**Dr Dana Suskind**

Author of *Thirty Million Words: Building a Child's Brain*



An early literacy programme by Wordworks

# ★ Dear Teacher

Wordworks is a non-profit organisation established in 2005 to support early language and literacy development. The Stellar programme was designed by Wordworks. It supports Grade R teachers in their important role as teachers of language and emergent literacy. We focus on Grade R because evidence shows that strong early language and literacy skills support all later learning.

## **EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

In order to learn to read and write, children need to have opportunities to build their competence and understanding in two key areas:

- language skills (listening, speaking, vocabulary and comprehension)
- code-related skills (phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge).

Children also need many opportunities to see how reading and writing work, and for these processes to be modelled by teachers and parents. They need to read and enjoy books and use drawing and early writing to share their ideas.

## **OUR PROGRAMME**

Stellar provides theoretical and practical ideas to help you build a language-rich classroom that supports early literacy development. The programme has been developed and revised in response to feedback from Grade R teachers and trainers. Stellar aligns with CAPS requirements.

## **STELLAR TEACHER'S GUIDES**

This *Teacher's Guide for parent meetings* assists you to work with parents to support language learning at home. It complements a set of guides for the teaching of Home Language, each 'starring' a new story! Each contains a two-week programme for teaching Home Language to your Grade R class every day.

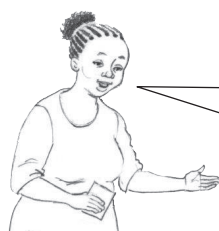
## **STELLAR TRAINING**

For teachers training to use the Stellar programme, there is a set of workbooks that takes you through the different elements of the programme while deepening your understanding of early language and literacy.

## **YOUR STORIES**

We know that teachers are creative about using whatever is available to them. We encourage you to adapt the activities in this guide to suit your context and the resources available.

## **MEET STELLA**



Hi. I will keep you company on your learning journey. Sometimes I will give you advice based on my years of experience in the Grade R classroom. Teachers have affectionately come to call me Stella!

We hope you enjoy using this programme. You will be giving your Grade R learners the best possible gift – and we know you will enjoy learning with them!

Our best wishes,

*Stella and the Wordworks Team*



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## ★ Introduction

This *Teacher's Guide for parent meetings* has been developed by Wordworks to help you, the Grade R teacher, to get parents interested in their children's Grade R classroom, especially as you implement the Stellar Home Language programme. This guide provides you with tools to inspire parents to support their children's language and literacy learning at home.

Most teachers would like their children's parents to be more informed about, and involved in, their children's learning. Many parents want to support their children, but don't always know how to. Some parents don't see it as their role – they believe that the school is responsible for all education. Others will say that they are simply too busy to take an interest in what their children are learning at school.

We know from research that it is very important for parents to be involved in their children's learning, particularly when children are young. It is important for Grade R children to know that their parents appreciate the school, and know and respect their teacher. When parents are positive about what happens at school, this helps children hold two very important parts of their world together – the home part and the school part. When parents pay attention to their children talking and reading, writing and drawing, then children will believe these activities are valued and important.

We encourage you to invite parents to meetings at the school. These meetings will help you and the parents to get to know one another and they create a space in which to share ideas and experiences. We know that planning and holding meetings can be overwhelming on top of a busy teaching schedule, so this guide has been written to provide some assistance. The guide sets out clear guidelines for six meetings, supported by photocopiable handouts and practical ideas.





# ★ How to use this guide

This guide is not designed for parents. It was written for you, the teacher, to use. It contains:

- Six meeting outlines: you may run the meetings as set out or adapt the structure for your particular needs.
- Photocopiable handouts: photocopy these information sheets for the parents.

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Meeting 3	26
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Handouts are listed here to show you what you will need to photocopy for parents in advance.

This table shows you how to manage the time in the meeting and what to plan and prepare before the meeting.

TIME	ACTIVITY	YOU WILL NEED
10 mins	WELCOME AND WARM UP	• Intro to letters and numbers of parent's name • Register to record attendance by parents
10 mins	TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION	• Photocopiable handout: Learning in Grade R (double-sided) • Photocopy of the handout with your own daily programme and themes if they are different at your school
10 mins	WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM	• Three items for Show and Tell
10 mins	WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME	• Photocopiable handout: How families can support children's early language and literacy
10 mins	CLOSING COMMENTS	

**Outline**

Don't try to do too much. Focus on making parents feel welcome and acknowledge their important role as their children's first teacher. Many parents feel anxious about attending meetings at school, and it is important that you build trust. Use the first meeting to show that you value their contribution. They will pass on this increased confidence and comfort with school to their children.

**WELCOME AND WARM-UP (10 MINS)**

- Welcome the parents.
- Ask the parents to get into pairs and introduce themselves.
- Ask them to show you their child's Grade R is a very important year in their child's school.

**TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION (10 MINS): THE GRADE R YEAR**

- Ask a few parents to share what they discussed about the importance of the Grade R year.
- Now go through the main headings of the double-sided photocopiable handout: Learning in Grade R. Suggest parents read it in detail at home.
- Invite the parents to ask questions. Take a few questions and provide answers. If there is a question that you cannot answer, be confident and say that you will find out after the meeting.
- In the discussion make sure you include the three key points.

The six meetings are listed on the Contents page.

We put key points in boxes. These are the points you must emphasise with parents.

Stella is here to help.



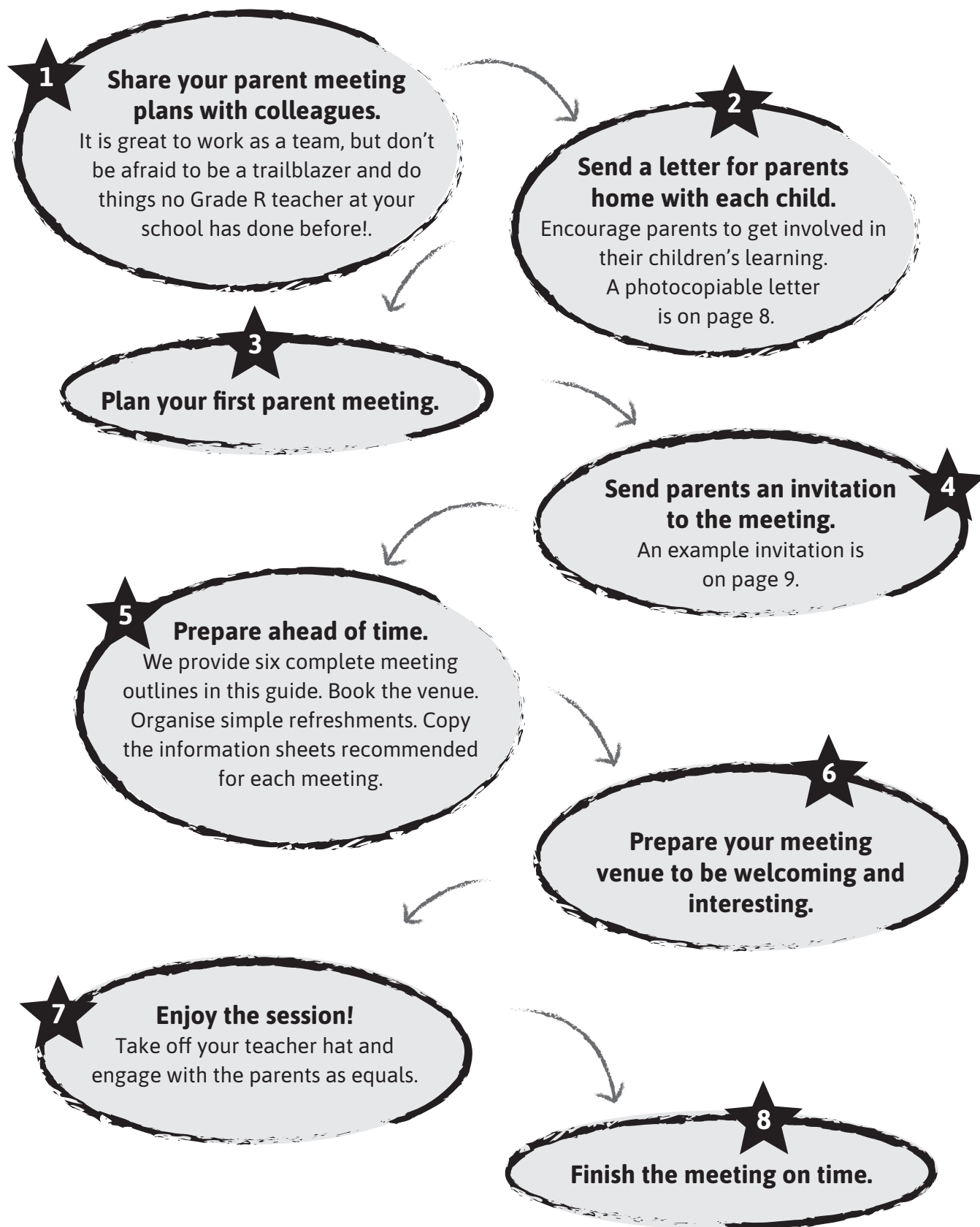
This tells you in which meeting you will use the handout.

Grade R: A typical daily programme			
PHOTOCOPIABLE HANDOUTS			
ARRIVAL			
10 mins	CREATING ROUTINE	• Items to bring to school	• Items to bring to school
10 mins	FOCUS ON LITERACY	• Grade R Photocopiable Handout: Learning in Grade R	• Grade R Photocopiable Handout: Learning in Grade R
10 mins	INDEPENDENT/OUTDOOR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES	• Drawing, cutting and pasting, painting, box construction, book corner, letter area, block corner and construction area, educational games and puzzles	• Drawing, cutting and pasting, painting, box construction, book corner, letter area, block corner and construction area, educational games and puzzles
10 mins	TOILET ROUTINE		
10 mins	RETREATMENT		
10 mins	FOCUS ON LIFE SKILLS	• Personal and Social Wellbeing, Beginning Knowledge, Creative Arts, Physical Education	• Personal and Social Wellbeing, Beginning Knowledge, Creative Arts, Physical Education
10 mins	OUTDOOR/INDOOR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES	• Drawing, cutting and pasting, painting, box construction, book corner, letter area, block corner and construction area, educational games and puzzles	• Drawing, cutting and pasting, painting, box construction, book corner, letter area, block corner and construction area, educational games and puzzles
10 mins	TOILET ROUTINE		
10 mins	FOCUS ON HOME LANGUAGE	• Ask the children to tell the teacher of experience with Grade R children. This is a very useful daily theme in progress programme, with associated activities at home, which has been shown to prepare children for learning in Grade R.	• Ask the children to tell the teacher of experience with Grade R children. This is a very useful daily theme in progress programme, with associated activities at home, which has been shown to prepare children for learning in Grade R.
10 mins	STORY TIME		
10 mins	QUIET TIME AND DEPARTURE		
Grade R themes (recommended by the Department of Education)			
FIRST TERM	SECOND TERM	THIRD TERM	FOURTH TERM
At school	At school	At school	At school
On the classroom	On the classroom	On the classroom	On the classroom
Days of the week	Days of the week	Days of the week	Days of the week
My body and healthy body	My body and healthy body	My body and healthy body	My body and healthy body
Summer	Summer	Summer	Summer
Sound, sight, touch	Sound, sight, touch	Sound, sight, touch	Sound, sight, touch
Personal and social	Personal and social	Personal and social	Personal and social
Health and safety	Health and safety	Health and safety	Health and safety

Photocopiable handouts are at the back of the guide. Give yourself time to read them carefully before the parent meetings. You can also send these handouts home with the children throughout the year, when appropriate.

# ★ How to organise meetings

## Getting started



## What comes next?

1

### **Plan more meetings.**

This *Teacher's Guide* includes outlines for six meetings. Each meeting focuses on a different component of language and early literacy.

2

### **Hand out more photocopiable handouts.**

These can be sent home either with the children or after a parent meeting. Even if parents are not able to attend meetings, they can read the photocopiable handouts to find out more about how they can support informal learning at home.

3

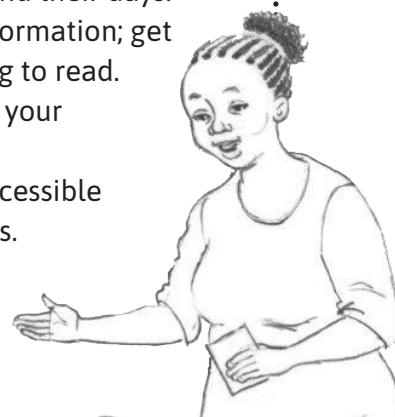
### **Communicate with parents in all sorts of ways!**

Send notes home to parents in children's message books; share inspirational messages in creative ways; arrange to meet with individual parents to discuss their children; make time to chat when parents come to fetch their children or at school events. Be a teacher who is warm, respectful and prepared to work together with parents.



### **Practical tips for running parent meetings**

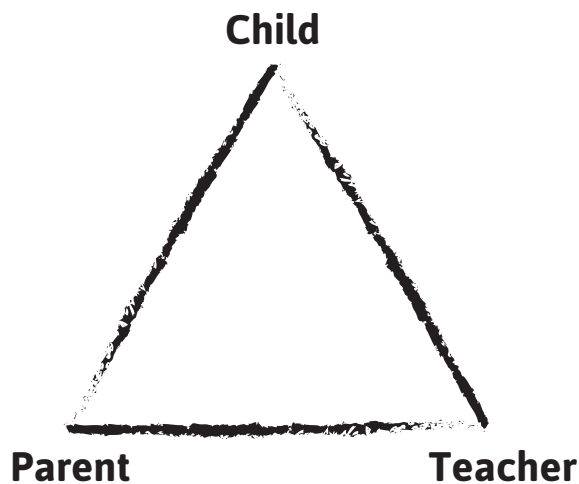
- Meet directly with parents in your classroom so you can get to know one another and parents can learn more about the space in which their children spend their days.
- At each meeting, try to give parents some useful and interesting information; get them involved by doing an activity; send them home with something to read.
- Don't try to do too much with parents. Use the meeting outlines for your planning and try to cover everything in the time allocated.
- Meetings should be enjoyable. Communicate in an inspiring and accessible way to gain the interest, confidence and participation of the parents.
- Plan to give out a few small prizes to create a fun atmosphere and acknowledge those parents who attend each session.
- Use the inspirational messages on pages 39 and 40 in whatever way you want to. Parents will enjoy these and learn from them.



# ★ Welcoming Grade R parents

## ***Dear Parents and Grandparents***

Welcome to Grade R. This is a very important year in your child's education, as we make sure they have a strong start to their formal schooling. We, the teachers, cannot do this alone. Remember: you are one of the key players in your child's learning triangle:



Each moment that you spend with your child can be a teaching and learning moment, BUT it must be fun, and it must be interactive! We will give you lots of ideas on how to support your child's learning.

One of the biggest gifts you can give your child is to make time to talk together every day. This will build your relationship *and* vital language skills that support all learning. We encourage you to communicate with your child in the language that comes most naturally to you. In this way, children will experience rich language and will have a strong base for learning other languages.

One of the resources we will use in class this year is the Stellar programme for strengthening early language and literacy. Stellar is a story-based programme, so every two or three weeks, your child will be introduced to a new story. Children will hear this same story every day and they will do many different activities related to this story and its characters. You can get involved by asking your child to tell you the story and perhaps to draw something about the story for you. If I send anything home, please talk with your child about it: ask questions and listen closely to the responses.

Learning to read and write is not something that happens overnight, but with the right encouragement and interest from you, you will be surprised how quickly your child becomes interested in sounds, letters and words, and starts 'having a go' at (or trying) reading and writing.

We want you to enjoy this exciting journey with your child. The best way to find out more about what your child is learning in Grade R is to come to the parent meetings. (Look out for invitations!) You can also make an appointment to chat to me after school hours. In this way you will become a partner in your child's education.

Parents, we need you!

Yours sincerely,



## Invitation

### ***Dear parents***

Do you wonder what your child does in Grade R every day?

Have you ever wished you could see what happens in your child's Grade R classroom?

Did you know that a lot of learning goes on while children play?

Would you like to know more about the Grade R curriculum?

Would you like to know how you can support your child's learning this year?

You are invited to a meeting of Grade R parents on \_\_\_\_\_

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

We hope to have a lot of fun and at the same time talk about ways of building important language and literacy foundations in Grade R.

Confirm your attendance by filling in the reply slip and returning it to school by

\_\_\_\_\_

.....  
**REPLY SLIP:**

I / we \_\_\_\_\_ parent / grandparent / guardian of

\_\_\_\_\_ would like to attend the parent's meeting on

\_\_\_\_\_.

Number of adults attending: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please note that children are not invited to the meeting as the discussion and activities have been designed for you as parents. This will be your time to learn and share. Please arrange for somebody to look after your children while you attend the meeting.***

.....



## MEETING 1 Introduction to learning in Grade R

### Planning and preparation

TIME	ACTIVITY	YOU WILL NEED
10 mins	<b>WELCOME AND WARM UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sticky labels and kokis to write names</li><li>• Register to record attendance by parents</li></ul>
30 mins	<b>TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photocopiable handout: <i>Learning in Grade R</i> (Replace page 2 of the handout with your own daily programme and themes if they are different at your school.)</li></ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Three items for <i>Show and tell</i></li></ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photocopiable handout: <i>How families can support children's early language and literacy</i></li></ul>
10 mins	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS</b>	

### Outline

Focus on making parents feel welcome and acknowledge their important role as their children's first teachers. Many parents feel anxious about attending meetings at school, and it is important that you build trust. Use the first meeting to show that you value their contribution. They will pass on this increased confidence and comfort with school to their children.

#### WELCOME AND WARM-UP (10 MINS)

- Welcome the parents.
- Ask the parents to get into pairs and introduce themselves.
- Ask them to share why they think Grade R is an important year in their child's school career.

#### TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION (30 MINS): THE GRADE R YEAR

- Ask a few parents to share what they discussed about the importance of the Grade R year.
- Go through the headings of the double-sided photocopiable handout: *Learning in Grade R*. Suggest parents read it in detail at home.
- Invite the parents to ask questions. Take a few questions and provide answers. If there is a question that you cannot answer, say that you will find out after the meeting.
- In the discussion make sure you include the three key points.

#### WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM (20 MINS)

- You will now demonstrate an activity that you do with the children so that parents get insight into how you support children's language development.
- Ask for three volunteers to do a *Show and tell* activity. Let each parent choose an object to show the group and to talk about. They should pretend they are children! Follow the steps you use with the children. See page 6 in any of our *Teacher's Guides*.





### KEY POINTS: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

- 1 Children start learning long before they get to school. In a learning home environment, parents will encourage talking, storytelling, reading and writing in warm, supportive and informal ways. Although parents are children's first teachers, home is not school.
- 2 Grade R is an important bridge from early childhood to school. Grade R teachers try to keep a balance between structured learning activities and free play, slowly introducing children to the expectations of school life.
- 3 Children with strong oral language skills (a good vocabulary and the ability to listen carefully and to explain their thoughts and ideas) and some knowledge of letters and sounds are more likely to learn to read and write successfully. For this reason, we give a lot of attention to oral language and emergent literacy in Grade R.

- Ask parents to chat in pairs.
  - What did they notice about the way the 'teacher' responded to each child?
  - How do they think the 'children' felt?
  - What do they think the 'children' learnt?
- Open up discussion with the whole group. Write down points made by the parents.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME (20 MINS)

- Ask a parent to join you for a role play in which they pretend to be a parent talking on their phone, and you are a child, trying to tell them something about your day.
- Ask them how they think the child felt and if this was an example of 'good talking time'.
- Ask parents what they can do to encourage good talking time at home. Take time to listen to and engage with their answers. Write up ideas.
- Inform parents that there is a handout (*How families can support children's early language and literacy*) that they can take home to read.

### CLOSING COMMENTS (10 MINUTES)

- Ask a few parents to share what they learnt.
- Remind them of the photocopyable handouts to take home.
- Tell the parents that the next meeting will focus on listening, speaking and telling stories.

### KEY POINTS: WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM

- 1 In the role play, the teacher showed patience and respect for the 'children'. She didn't correct every mistake the 'child' made but modelled the right way of saying things. She added to what children said and built on their ideas. She asked questions that extended children's thinking.
- 2 The children felt important and that their input was interesting and valued. They learnt to take turns, to listen carefully.

### KEY POINTS: WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- 1 If parents struggle to think of when they can encourage 'good talking time', ask them to think of what they could talk about on the way to school, or in the evening when they are preparing supper. Good talking time can happen anywhere, anytime. It can happen for just a few minutes, but children need opportunities every day to speak and be heard.
- 2 Parents can ask and answer questions, take turns to talk with their child, tell stories together and explain the meanings of new words.

# MEETING 2 Storytelling

## Planning and preparation

TIME	ACTIVITY	YOU WILL NEED
10 mins	<b>WELCOME AND WARM UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sticky labels and kokis to write names</li> <li>Register to record attendance by parents</li> </ul>
30 mins	<b>TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION</b>	
20 mins	<b>WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stellar story and puppets: <i>Spot goes to the shop</i></li> <li>Display table with Teacher's Guide sequence pictures, Big Book, little books, samples of work</li> </ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photocopiable handout: <i>Speaking and listening – building children's oral language</i></li> </ul>
10 mins	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS</b>	

## Outline

Show parents how easy it is to get their children actively listening and speaking. Every adult can enjoy telling a story and then chatting with children about the story.

This meeting is a good opportunity to introduce parents to some of the Stellar materials.

### WELCOME AND WARM-UP (10 MINS)

- Welcome the parents. Give a special welcome to anyone who wasn't at the first meeting.
- Play 'I spy with my little eye', focusing on colours. For example: "I spy with my little eye, something in this room that is red." The parent who identifies the red object you had in mind, now has a turn. You only have time for a few rounds. Encourage parents to play the game at home with their children.

### TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION (30 MINS): STORYTELLING BUILDS YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE

- Start off by saying: "Do you remember adults telling you stories when you were a child?"
- Ask the parents to get into pairs. For ten minutes, the pairs share one memory of storytelling from their childhood.
- Bring the group back together and encourage group sharing and discussion. You can use these questions to spark ideas:
  - Who was the storyteller in your home?
  - What stories did you like best? Do you remember asking for a story again and again?
  - Were the stories told in your home language?
  - Do you remember any particular storytelling techniques?
- On the board, or on newsprint, write down points made by the parents.

### WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM (20 MINS)

- Explain that the Stellar programme is built around stories because young children love stories. Show them the table where you have set up a display of Stellar story materials:



### KEY POINTS: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

- 1 There are many kinds of stories: traditional stories passed down in our communities, stories that we can read in books, and personal narratives. A personal narrative is a story about events that you or your children were part of.
- 2 Stories that have a positive ending are always best for young children. This gives them a sense of confidence that, like the main character in the story, they will receive the help they need and are strong and smart enough to cope with challenges.
- 3 Tell stories in the language you speak at home! Even if you sometimes read stories in the official school language, it is very important for your child to hear you using your own language. When you do this, you will tell the most interesting stories in the most rich and descriptive language.

puppets, sequence pictures, Big Books and little books.

- Tell the story of *Spot goes to the shop* while the parents pretend that they are children. Use the puppets and change your voice for the different characters.
- When the story is finished, ask the parents: “Did you enjoy the story? What did you enjoy the most? Have you heard the story before from your children?”

### WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME (20 MINS)

- Explain that parents will not naturally tell stories like you do in class, with puppets and props. However, at home you can tell stories about what happens in everyday life. Children love hearing stories about themselves and people they know.
- Parents work in pairs to practise telling personal narratives. These are stories about everyday events – a visit to grandparents, a car that got stuck, scoring a goal in a soccer game. One parent will role-play the ‘parent’; the other will role-play the ‘child’.
- Ask the ‘parents’ and the ‘children’: “Did you enjoy the stories? What did you enjoy the most?” Write down points made by the parents.

### CLOSING COMMENTS (10 MINUTES)

- Ask a few parents to share what they learnt.
- Encourage them to tell stories to their child and listen to stories their children want to share.
- Give the handout called *Speaking and listening – building children’s oral language*.
- Tell parents that the next meeting focuses on reading and sharing books with children.



### KEY POINTS: WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- 1 Personal narratives often mean the most to young children. Because your children might be a character in the story, they feel important and valued. This builds their confidence. Take care to make your child the hero in the story!
- 2 Make sure you give your children opportunities to contribute to personal narratives. In this way they become storytellers. They might remember the places, the sequence of events, and the characters and can help you tell the story. You are showing them that you value the experiences you share with them and you value their version of events. By showing your children that you trust them, you encourage them to share more of their life with you and you will have the joy of getting to know your children better.



## MEETING 3 Reading and sharing books with children

### Planning and preparation

TIME	ACTIVITY	YOU WILL NEED
10 mins	<b>WELCOME AND WARM UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sticky labels and kokis to write names</li> <li>Register to record attendance by parents</li> <li>Enlarged alphabet chart</li> </ul>
30 mins	<b>TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photocopiable handout: <i>How children benefit when an older person reads them a storybook</i></li> <li>Display table with a collection of appealing fiction and non-fiction children's books in different languages</li> </ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An age-appropriate storybook with colourful illustrations, limited text and an exciting storyline</li> </ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photocopiable handout: <i>Tips for reading storybooks to young children</i></li> </ul>
10 mins	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS</b>	

### Outline

Try to meet in a library for this meeting to inspire parents to use this precious resource. Parents will experience how books can be read in an interactive way, then they will practise this new way of reading.

#### WELCOME AND WARM-UP (15 MINS)

- Play 'I spy with my little eye' focusing on beginning sounds. For example: "I spy with my little eye, something in this room that begins with /b/." The parent who identifies your object now has a turn. Encourage parents to play 'I spy' at home.
- Use the alphabet chart to show the difference between letter sounds and letter names. Children need to know the sounds that letters make in order to learn to read and write.

#### TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION (30 MINS): READING AND SHARING BOOKS BUILDS YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- Begin by saying: "Can you remember anyone reading you a book when you were a child? Close your eyes and remember how it felt to be a child listening to someone reading to you."
- It is possible that some parents were not read to as children. Ask those who have memories to share them with the group. Ask them:
  - Who read books to you when you were a child?
  - How did you feel when the book was being read? Why do you think it felt that way?
  - Was the book in your home language? What language was it written in?
  - Does anyone remember a favourite book from their childhood or a book that they love to read to their own children? (Show parents your display table of children's books.)
  - Why do you think it is important to read books with children?



### KEY POINTS: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

- 1 If children have memories of special, loving times with an adult reading them a book, they are more likely to learn to read easily and enjoy reading books throughout their lives.
- 2 By reading books with children, we are introducing them to new worlds and story language that is far more rich and descriptive than the language we use every day.

### WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM (20 MINS)

- Explain that you read the children a book every day.
- Demonstrate how you read for enjoyment in class. Introduce the book, title and author and do a picture walk through the book. Read the story with expression. Include a few open-ended questions and opportunity for prediction. ("How do you think she was feeling ... ? What would you have done if ... ? What do you think will happen next ... ?") Listen carefully to the response of each 'child'.
- When the story is finished, ask the parents:
  - Did you enjoy the story? What did you notice about how the story was read?
  - What kind of questions did I ask and how did I respond to each 'child'?
  - Why is it important to read stories like this?
- On the board, or on newsprint, write down points made by the parents.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME (20 MINS)

- Encourage parents to try and set aside ten minutes a day to read a storybook to their child.
- Ask the parents to work in pairs to role-play reading a book to a child.
- They begin by choosing a book from the display. While they are at the display, explain the difference between storybooks and readers.
- Ask the 'parent' to read to the 'child' with expression using different voices.
- Remind parents that when they read to their children at home, they have a good opportunity to snuggle up close and use this special time to connect.

### CLOSING COMMENTS (10 MINS)

- Ask a few parents to share what they learnt.
- Get them to think about when they can make time every day to read to their children.
- Tell the parents that the next meeting will focus on how children begin reading.

### KEY POINTS: WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM

- 1 Read storybooks to children in an interactive manner – talking about the book is as important as reading the book!
- 2 Closed questions are questions which have a right or a wrong answer. A closed question is something like: "Where were the children going?" If you ask a closed question, you are checking to see if the child has understood the basic elements of the story. When you ask open-questions, children need to think for themselves, give an opinion or imagine how it would be to be someone in the story.

### KEY POINTS: WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- 1 Readers are not the best storybooks to read to young children. We encourage parents to go to the library and choose storybooks with colourful illustrations, not too much text and an exciting storyline.
- 2 Give parents the double-sided handout: *How children benefit when an older person reads them a storybook* and *Tips for reading storybooks to young children*.

# MEETING 4 Emergent reading

## Planning and preparation

TIME	ACTIVITY	YOU WILL NEED
15 mins	<b>WELCOME AND WARM UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sticky labels and kokis to write names</li> <li>Register to record attendance by parents</li> <li>Shopping vouchers; advertising flyers; crayons</li> </ul>
25 mins	<b>TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photocopiable handout: <i>How you can encourage emergent reading</i></li> <li>Six cartoons cut from a copy of the photocopiable handout: <i>How you can encourage emergent reading</i> (do not include the smiling/frowning faces) plus copies for parents</li> </ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Spot goes to the shop</i> Big Book and sequence pictures. Enough copies of Stellar's <i>Spot goes to the shop</i> little book to fold</li> <li>Instructions to make little books; scissors</li> </ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blank paper; scissors</li> <li>A variety of Stellar little books</li> </ul>
10 mins	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS</b>	

## Outline

This session gives parents ideas about how to use everyday events to encourage a child's curiosity about pictures, letters and words in their environment.

### WELCOME AND WARM-UP (15 MINS)

- Welcome the parents and then hand out one shopping brochure and crayon to each pair of parents. Now have fun with a quiz, asking questions like:
  - Can you find something that comes from a cow?
  - Draw a circle around something that is orange.
  - Put your finger on something that starts with /b/.
  - Count the number of salty things on your page.
- Can they imagine having fun playing this game with their children? What will they learn from it? Did they realise that shopping brochures could be used for learning?

### TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION (25 MINS): WHAT IS EMERGENT READING AND WRITING?

- Divide parents into six groups. Give each group one of the cartoons in the handout. Ask them to choose two people to act this out for the class. They have ten minutes to prepare.
- Ask each pair of actors to present, first the negative and then the positive examples. (Don't identify the cartoons like this to the parents. You want them to comment on the behaviour for themselves.)



- Ask parents to comment on the experience. How do you think the parents' different responses to the child's reading and writing impacted on the child's learning?
- Hand out and discuss the handout *How you can encourage emergent reading*. Ask a strong reader in the group to read the paragraph above the cartoons.

### KEY POINTS: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

- 1 We all had a time in our lives when we had not yet realised that printed words could be read.
- 2 It is important for parents to affirm children whenever they behave like readers and writers.
- 3 Parents should point out writing and picture symbols to children and discuss them.

### WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM (20 MINS)

- Demonstrate how you use the Big Book.
- Hand out copies of the little book for the same story of the Big Book, a copy of the instructions and scissors.
- Guide the parents to fold a little book.
- Ask parents to 'read' the little book to a partner (even though there are no words!).
- Ask the parents if their children have brought home a little book. Have they 'read' the book to them? Share feedback.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME (20 MINS)

- Hand out blank paper and guide the parents as they fold a blank little book.
- Discuss what could go in the little books (e.g. a number book, a book about favourite things, an alphabet book with drawings of things that start with the same sound).
- In pairs, ask the parents to discuss what little book they would like to make with their child. Suggest that they fold the book, but let the child draw and write independently, with their positive support. Give them extra blank paper to take home.

### CLOSING COMMENTS (10 MINS)

- Ask a few parents to share what they learnt.
- Remind them that whenever they are out they should point out environmental print.
- Tell the parents that the next meeting will focus on drawing and emergent writing.

### KEY POINTS: WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM

- 1 You only use the Big Book once you have told the story many times. The Big Book helps children make the connection between the words of the story and the words on the page.
- 2 In class, the children only receive a little book after they have heard the story many times. They have already acted the story, sequenced pictures about the story, and sung songs related to the story. This is why they can 'read' so well even though there are no words!

### KEY POINTS: WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- 1 Whenever possible give your children opportunities to 'read' and 'write'. For example, if you make a little book, instead of making a beautiful one yourself – allow your child to do the writing and the illustrations. Then ask your child to read it to you. You'll be amazed at everything your child has thought about – even if the writing is just scribbles and the pictures are not that clear.
- 2 Sometimes it feels difficult to make time to play, read, draw and write with our children. Parents are very busy people! But even five or ten minutes of focused time with your child will make a big difference to your child's learning and to your relationship. Give it a try!

## MEETING 5 Drawing and emergent writing

### Planning and preparation

TIME	ACTIVITY	YOU WILL NEED
10 mins	<b>WELCOME AND WARM UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sticky labels and kokis to write names</li> <li>Register to record attendance by parents</li> <li>A lovely short story book with lots of pictures</li> </ul>
30 mins	<b>TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing paper for each parent and enough coloured crayons for parents to share.</li> <li>Photocopiable handout: <i>Affirming our children</i></li> </ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM</b>	
20 mins	<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photocopiable handout: <i>Examples of emergent writing</i></li> </ul>
10 mins	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS</b>	

### Outline

Parents will discover that the way they react to their children's efforts is critically important. You will show them the difference between praising the person and praising the process.

#### WELCOME AND WARM-UP (10 MINS)

- Gather parents together and read them a lovely children's book. (Don't use a Stellar story.)
- Read in an interactive way, showing the pictures, using expression and different voices.

#### TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION (30 MINS): DRAWING AND EMERGENT WRITING

- Give each parent a blank piece of drawing paper and some colourful crayons.
- Ask parents to spend 5 minutes drawing their favourite part of the story. Give encouragement.
- Now ask parents to form pairs. Parent A shows Parent B their drawing. Parent B gives Parent A positive feedback on the drawing. Then change around.
- Ask the parents: "How did it feel to show your picture to someone else? How did it feel to comment on someone else's drawing?"
- Choose one willing parent's drawing and role play some different ways that an adult could respond to a child's drawing.

#### KEY POINTS: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

- Drawing is one of the most important ways that children can express what they are thinking. When children draw, they think through a number of things that are important for learning to write: What is happening? Who do I want to draw? Where are they? What are they doing?
- Drawing encourages children to observe things so they can represent them on paper.
- Children aren't born knowing how to draw, so we have to give them lots of opportunities to draw and lots of encouragement. It is frightening to show someone else your work.

- Talk about meaningful praise of process rather than outcomes, and go through the handout called *Affirming our children*.

### **WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM (20 MINS)**

- Choose another willing parent and sit next to him/her. Ask the other parents to group around and watch you role play the teacher while the parent role plays a child.
- Ask the 'child' to tell you what they want you to write about the drawing. Write it neatly and clearly on their drawing page, using their exact words.
- Now ask the 'child' to tell you something more about the picture and encourage them to try and write something about the drawing.
- Ask the child to read you what he/she has written, and give plenty of praise. Remind parents that we do not correct spelling at this early stage of learning to write.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME (20 MINS)**

- Ask parents to think about their busy day at home. In groups, ask them to discuss when they could make time for drawing in their home and when they could encourage their child to write for a purpose (e.g. a birthday card).
- Discuss the handout: *Examples of emergent writing*.

### **CLOSING COMMENTS (10 MINS)**

- Ask a few parents to share what they learnt.
- Tell the parents that the next meeting will focus on introducing sounds and letters.

### **KEY POINTS: WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM**

- 1** We encourage children to talk about their drawings and then offer to write down the child's words for them, so they know that their words are valuable.
- 2** As the child develops confidence, we encourage them to have a go at writing something themselves. They may start off by using scribbles. As children begin to link letters and sounds together, their writing may start to include letters and they may start leaving spaces between 'words'. We help them to separate out words, by counting words on our fingers, or drawing lines for them to write the words on.
- 3** As time goes on, children may use letters to represent sounds and we begin to make out what words they intend to write. We do not correct their spelling at this stage. We give lots of praise and assist them with sounding out the words they want to write.

### **KEY POINTS: WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME**

- 1** Whenever possible, give your children opportunities to draw and 'write'. Remember to give targeted and genuine praise. At this age, there is no need to correct or change their drawing or writing.
- 2** Find at least one thing in your child's drawing to praise or to chat about. Comment on how the child took up the challenge – she was focused; he was imaginative. Praise is effective when it is genuine and specific.
- 3** Encourage your children to write next to you as you make lists, write down messages and write birthday and get well cards. When children see you writing, they learn how useful writing is.



## MEETING 6 Introducing sounds and letters

### Planning and preparation

TIME	ACTIVITY	YOU WILL NEED
10 mins	<b>WELCOME AND WARM UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sticky labels and kokis to write names</li><li>Register to record attendance by parents</li><li>Photocopiable handout: <i>Listening games to support emergent reading and writing</i></li></ul>
30 mins	<b>TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Two letter boxes containing objects or pictures that start with a specific sound</li></ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Display table with letter boxes, playdough letters, letters written on whiteboards, sand trays, chalk, paintbrushes and rainbow letters.</li></ul>
20 mins	<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Alphabet chart</li><li>Photocopiable handout: <i>Games to play using the alphabet chart</i></li><li>Word bird game</li></ul>
10 mins	<b>CLOSING COMMENTS</b>	

### Outline

In this last meeting, parents will be introduced to letters and the sounds they make. Encourage parents to use the sounds, rather than the names of letters with their children.

#### WELCOME AND WARM-UP (10 MINS)

- Welcome the parents and play all the listening games on the photocopiable handout: *Listening games to support emergent reading and writing*.
- Discuss how these listening games encourage children to listen for sounds in words.

#### TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION (30 MINS): LETTERS AND SOUNDS

- Ask parents to discuss these questions in small groups then share with the big group:
  - Do you think children should learn about letters in Grade R?
  - What children need to learn about letters?
- Write parents' responses on flipchart paper. Don't worry if parents have different opinions.
- Now do a shortened letter box activity with the parents. Take the objects out of one box and ask parents to name them in their home language.
  - Ask questions: "Have you seen one of these? What do we use this for?"
  - Emphasise the beginning sounds of words, for example: t-t-tissues, t-t-torch and ask the parents, "Can you hear what sound 'torch' starts with?"
  - Now show them the letter on the letter box and say: "This is how we write t." Demonstrate how to 'write' the letter in the air.



- Now go back to the responses you wrote on the flipchart paper and explain that it is very important that children learn about letters in Grade R. The letter box activity has given parents an idea of the different things children need to learn about letters.

### KEY POINTS: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

- 1 Explain that research has taught us that children who enter Grade 1 with a strong knowledge of letters and sounds are more likely to become strong, confident readers and writers.
- 2 This does not mean that young children should copy letters on paper. Children learn best when they are having fun and letters are best learnt through games and activities that involve all their senses.
- 3 Remind parents that although children learn the names of letters in the alphabet song (ay, bee, cee, dee etc), it is the sounds that help children sound out words. We would therefore like parents to focus on the sounds that letters make, rather than letter names.

### WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM (20 MINS)

- Ask the parents to pretend they are children and take them through the four steps of introducing a new letter: listening for beginning sounds in words; saying the sounds; generating words that begin with that sound; forming the letter that goes with the sound.
- Show parents a table where you have set up a display of multisensory activities. Demonstrate how the children use these different materials to write using big movements.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME (20 MINS)

- Remind parents about the 'I spy game' that you played at earlier sessions. This is good for building awareness of beginning sounds.
- Give each parent a copy of the alphabet chart, the photocopiable handout, *Games to play using the alphabet chart* and the Word bird game.
- Read through the games with the parents and play a few games together.

### CLOSING COMMENTS (10 MINS)

- Ask a few parents to share what they learnt.
- Ask: When can they make time every day for listening games and alphabet chart games?
- Thank parents for being your partner in a wonderful year of learning.

### KEY POINTS: WHAT WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOM

- 1 With each new Stellar story, you introduce the children to two new letters. You help them to listen for sounds in words, and show them how to write the letter that goes with each sound.
- 2 Young children struggle to hold a pencil properly and to write small letters neatly. This is why we form letters using big movements and different writing materials.

### KEY POINTS: WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- 1 Remind parents that it takes time to learn about letters, and they should never be impatient with their children if they make mistakes or don't remember a letter when playing games.



## Learning in Grade R

### What we do in Grade R to build children's language and literacy development

During the Home Language period each day, we work with one of the Stellar stories and do the related activities. We engage with the same story in different ways, every morning, for two weeks. The first time children hear the story, they remember simple things such as who the characters are and a few words or a phrase from the story. As children become more familiar with the story, they are able to grasp more detail, understand the sequence of the story and make predictions about what will happen next. Children start remembering new words and phrases, and have the confidence to use these words and phrases when they talk.

We work as a whole class to discuss, act out, read and write about the story. Eventually it will be the children who tell the story, using the new vocabulary they have learnt. They will draw pictures about the story with some 'writing' to describe their pictures, and will bring home little books that they will 'read' to you. This early reading and writing is absolutely appropriate for Grade R. It is something to be encouraged and celebrated. We call it emergent literacy.

#### Speaking and listening

We encourage good talking time every day, giving new vocabulary as we talk. We ask and answer questions, especially 'how' and 'why' questions. We sing together and do action rhymes. We tell and retell stories, with a beginning, a middle and an end. We read books aloud in an interactive way. We encourage children to play and give them simple props to encourage pretend play.

#### Emergent reading

We notice words and numbers all around us and we read them together: labels and signs, birthday dates and names. We talk about books we are reading and we read lots of books. We encourage children to read their favourite stories to us, even if they are remembering or guessing the words.

#### Drawing and emergent writing

We offer daily opportunities for children to draw and to talk about their pictures. We help children to write their names. We encourage children to try writing down their own ideas or we write for them as they share their ideas. We tell children about what we are writing. We write things together with children and read the writing back to them.

#### Knowledge of sounds and letters

We sing together and do action rhymes. We play 'I spy' and other listening games. We learn about letters and what sounds they make. We learn about sounds in words. We break words up into syllables. We form letters in the sand or using paint and chalk.



## Grade R: A typical daily programme

TIME	ACTIVITY	WHAT WE DO IN THIS TIME
	<b>ARRIVAL</b>	• Greet teacher, hang up bag, fruit in bowl
10 mins	<b>GREETING ROUTINE</b>	• Form a circle, sing, discuss weather
50 mins	<b>FOCUS ON MATHS</b>	• Grade R Mathematics (Emergent Numeracy)
45 mins	<b>INDOOR/OUTDOOR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES</b>	• Drawing, cutting and pasting, painting, box construction, book corner, fantasy area, block corner and construction area, educational games and puzzles
10 mins	<b>TOILET ROUTINE</b>	
20 mins	<b>REFRESHMENTS</b>	
30 mins	<b>FOCUS ON LIFE SKILLS</b>	• Personal and Social Wellbeing, Beginning knowledge, Creative Arts, Physical Education
30 mins	<b>OUTDOOR/INDOOR ACTIVITIES</b>	• Sand play; water play; sensopathic play; climbing; balancing; wheeled toys; balls/beanbags; fantasy play
10 mins	<b>TOILET ROUTINE</b>	
60 mins	<b>FOCUS ON HOME LANGUAGE</b>	• At our school we use the Stellar programme. This is a story-based daily Home Language programme, with associated activities and games, which has been shown to prepare children successfully for Grade 1.
15 mins	<b>STORY TIME</b>	• A different story every day, read aloud, for enjoyment
	<b>QUIET TIME AND DEPARTURE</b>	

## Grade R themes (recommended by the Department of Education)

FIRST TERM	SECOND TERM	THIRD TERM	FOURTH TERM
Me	Home	Winter	Spring
At school	Safety	Transport	Reptiles
In the classroom	My family	Jobs people do	Dinosaurs
Days of the week	Weather	Water	Wild animals
My body & healthy living	Autumn	Fruit	One wild animal
Summer	Sound, sight, touch	Vegetables	Sport
Shapes & colours	Taste & smell	Dairy farming	
Festivals & special days		Wool farming	
		Healthy environment	



## How families can support children's early language and literacy



### **Talk and listen**

Through talking, listening and being listened to, children learn words and how to communicate.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Follow what interests your child and respond using comments, questions and careful listening.



### **Help children play**

Play is the most natural way of learning for children. Pretend play helps children to develop language.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Let children take the lead in their games. Give simple equipment like a hat or a box to encourage pretend play. As you play alongside children, introduce new language and ideas.



### **Enjoy stories and books**

Telling and reading stories creates lots of opportunities to learn, as children hear new words, find out about their world and talk about what is going on.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Involve children in storytelling by making it a time full of conversation. Welcome children's comments and help them relate the story to their own lives and think about what is going on.



### **Enjoy songs and rhymes**

Songs and action rhymes are fun ways for children to express themselves and to hear and use new language.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Sing songs and do action rhymes often.



### **Point out print (writing)**

When children notice the printed writing around them they start to understand that it is speech written down. Children are keen to have a go at writing when they see what it is for.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Point out print on labels and signs and in storybooks. Encourage children to 'read' the print around them.



### **Support drawing and mark-making**

Children love to draw and paint. Drawing is a way of representing what we see around us or what is in our head. This is similar to how writing works.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Help children to notice how things look. Encourage them to draw what they see. Ask children to say what they have drawn.



### **Encourage early writing**

Children's early attempts at writing may look like scribbles or marks. It is important for you to encourage, and not correct, these early writing efforts.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Let children see you writing and write down children's words for them. Give children materials to enable them to include pretend writing in their play. Help children to write their name.



## Speaking and listening – building children’s oral language

The more opportunities young children have to speak and be spoken to, the stronger their language and communication skills will become. Children with good language and communication skills are likely to find it easier to learn to read and write.

The language we use when we are caring for and communicating with our children is very different from the language used in stories and in the classroom. We could call the one ‘everyday language’ and the other ‘abstract language’. Abstract language is used in explanations, pretend play, stories and books. If our children are exposed only to ‘everyday language’ in the years before Grade 1, they will find it very difficult to adjust to the ‘abstract language’ used in books. So, by telling and reading many stories, we can make it easier for them to adjust to the more complex ‘abstract language’ they are expected to understand and use at school.

Try to use every opportunity to listen to and speak with your children.

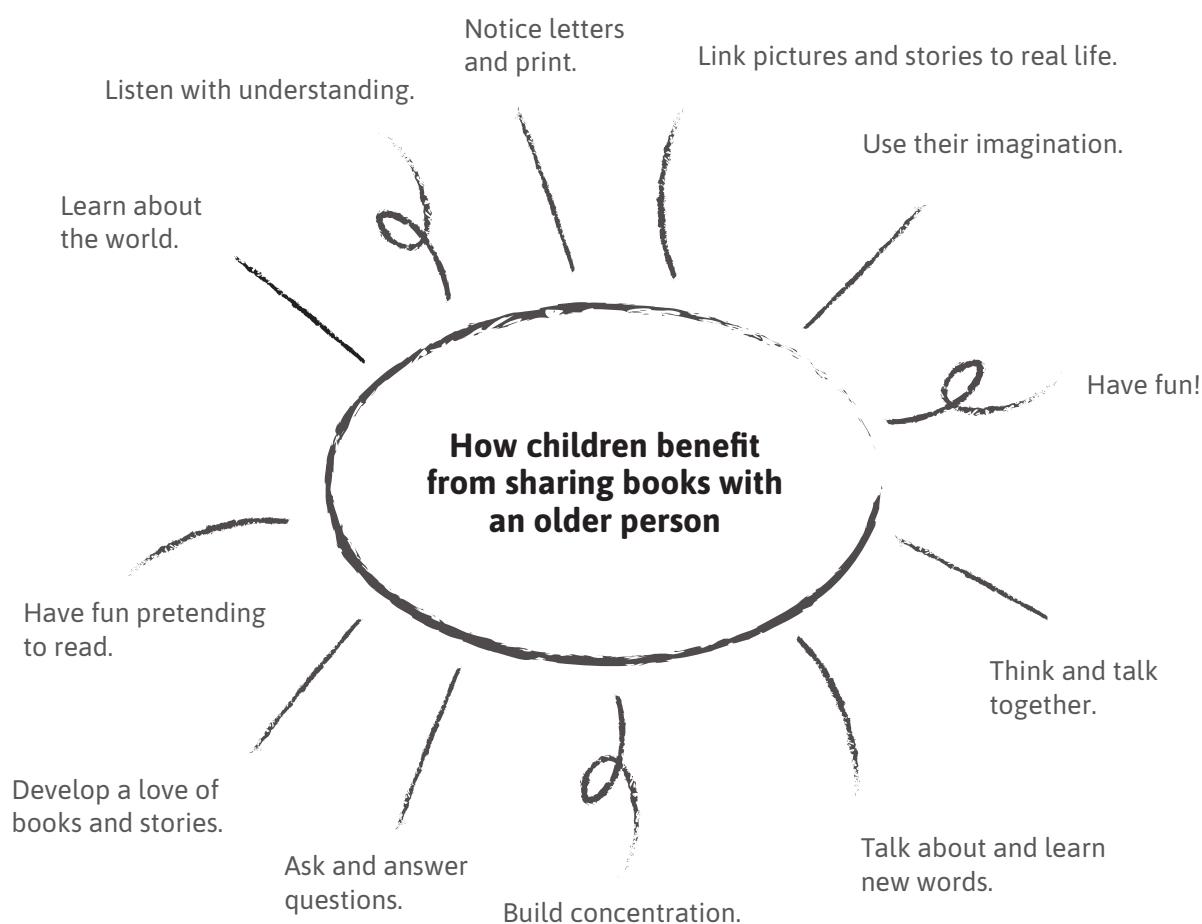
- Ask your child to tell you something specific about their school day.  
For example: “Tell me about the big playground clean up you all did today.”
- Give your child detailed instructions.  
For example: “Please will you get three carrots and four potatoes out of the veggie rack, wash them and bring them to me with the peeler from the top drawer? Thanks.”
- Ask your child questions and listen attentively to their answers, encouraging detail, description and opinion. (Now, listen to and answer their questions.)  
Remember, if children ask questions it means they are really thinking, and thinking is the basis of good learning!
- Ask your children for their opinions.  
For example: “Do you think we should bake a cake or make some curry to take to Auntie Doris when we go there to see her new baby?”
- Encourage your child to make predictions.  
For example: “What do you think will happen if it rains during your soccer game tomorrow?”







## How children benefit when an older person reads them a storybook





## Tips for reading storybooks to young children

### **Before reading**

1. Snuggle up comfortably so that your child can see the text and the pictures.
2. Look at the cover of the book together. Ask your child what they think the story will be about.
3. Take a picture walk through the book, looking at the pictures and chatting about what is happening on some of the pages.
4. Read the title of the story, and point out the name of the author and the illustrator.
5. Link the story to some of your child's own experiences.

### **During reading**

1. Read with expression, using different voices for different characters, as well as facial expressions.
2. Keep your child involved by asking a few questions and making some comments that link the story to everyday life. Try not to interrupt the flow of the story too much.
3. Ask questions that will help your child predict what is coming next in the story, e.g. "Who do you think is behind the rock ...?"
4. Ask open ended questions that make your child think. For example: "I wonder why he ...?" or: "How do you think he was feeling?"

### **After reading**

1. Encourage your child to talk about the story, to ask questions and share their personal responses to the story.
2. Ask and answer questions about the story.
3. Be prepared to re-read parts of the story if your child asks you to.
4. If there is time you can ask your child to tell you the story in their own words, or you can sit together and draw a picture about the story.

Storybooks and stories to share with children are available online at:

[www.bookdash.org](http://www.bookdash.org)

[www.africanstorybook.org](http://www.africanstorybook.org)

[www.nalibali.org](http://www.nalibali.org)







Try accessing these websites on your phone.

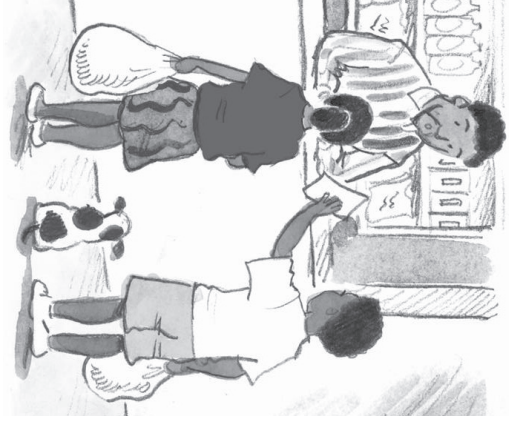
Remember that joining a library is free. All that you need to take along is your ID book and a municipal account. You can borrow books and keep them for two weeks at a time.



# ★ How you can encourage emergent reading

Children love to show how they can 'read' what is written, even if they are just saying the words from memory or using the pictures or letters as clues to what the print says. Children also love to 'write' letters, lists and stories even if these start off as scribbles, made-up letters and parts of words. Remember, if we criticise children and correct them often, they lose confidence in themselves and stop trying. When they are young, it is important to encourage them to read and write often, even if they are not getting it all right. Learning to read and write takes time and we need to give children the space to try without being afraid of mistakes.

☹️	<p>Oh stop pretending...you are not really reading... you are still too young!</p>  <p>Once upon a time</p>	<p>Wow, you are reading so beautifully! And your teddy is loving it. Well done!</p>  <p>Once upon a time</p>	😊
😊	<p>Cornflakes! I can read Pa! I can read!</p>  <p>Yes, good reading my boy! Now show me where it says /m/ for milk.</p>	<p>Cornflakes! I can read Pa! I can read!</p>  <p>Stop talking and eat your cereal... I'm busy reading the paper</p>	☹️
😊	<p>I am going to the shop just now with Mom. See, I have made a list. What does my list say, Granny?</p>  <p>I can see exactly what you are going to buy: sugar and tea and rice. What a great shopping list. Let me add something here. /a/ apples. I think we need some fruit!</p>	<p>I am going to the shop just now with Mom. See, I have made a list. What does my list say, Granny?</p>  <p>I can see three words but they are not correct. I think I should rather write the list for you so that your mom will be able to read it.</p>	☹️



This book belongs to: .....

**Wordworks**  
Changing lives through literacy

Spot goes to the shop



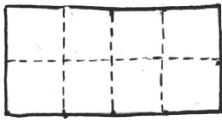
# ★ How to make a little book

## You will need

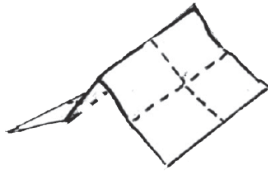
Photocopy of little book for this story

## STEPS

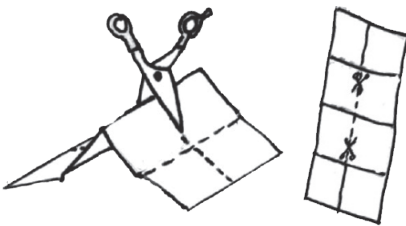
1. Fold an A4-sized copy of the little book into eight pieces. Unfold.



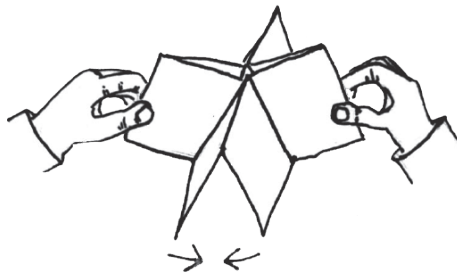
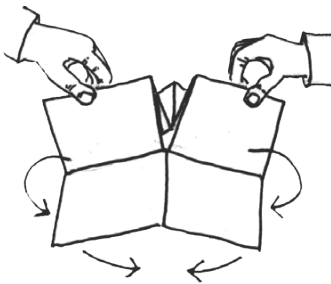
2. Fold the page in half.



3. Cut on the middle fold. (The illustration shows you where to cut.)



4. Hold the page between your finger and your thumb on both sides.
5. Bring your hands down and together. Follow the diagrams to complete the four-paged little book.



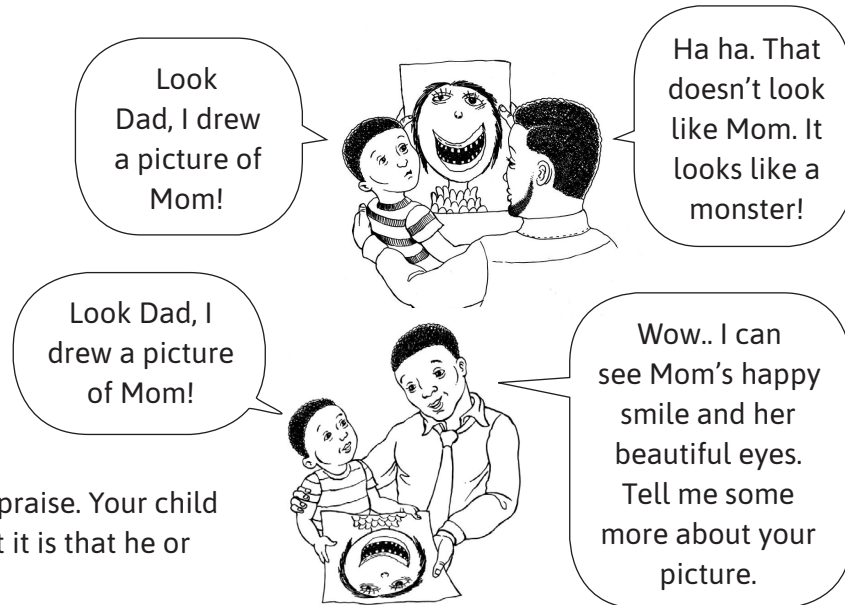




## Affirming our children

How we react to our children's drawing, writing, pretend reading and talking is very important. It can either encourage our child to do more and go further, or it can make our child shut down and not try at all.

As parents and teachers, we should always try to give meaningful praise and commend the child for something specific, such as the detail in a drawing, or the act of sharing, or the use of please and thank you. Words like 'nice', 'good', 'wonderful' are very general and they don't make it clear why your child has earned your praise. Your child needs to know exactly what it is that he or she has done well.


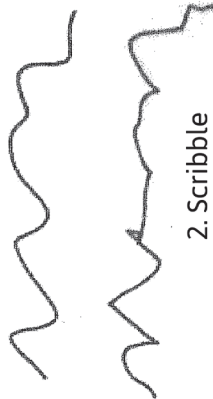
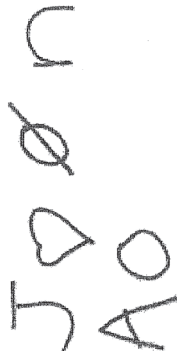




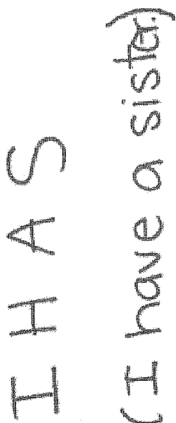
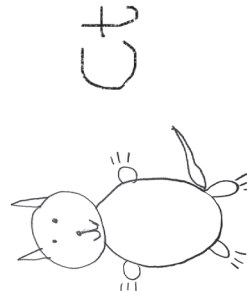
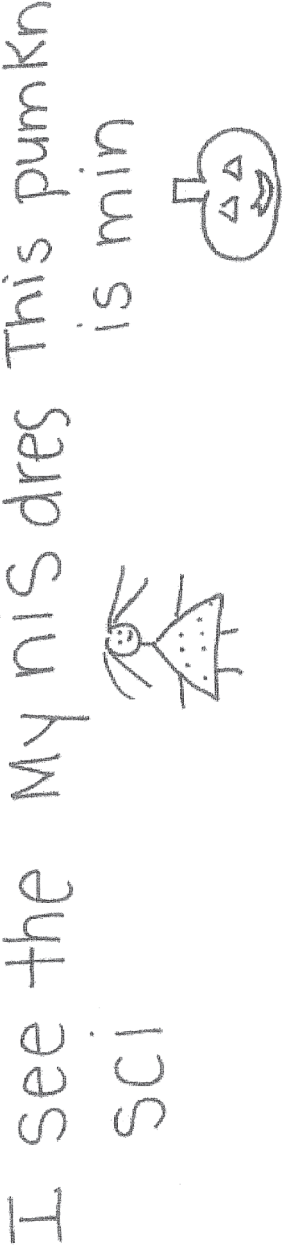


It is possible to respond in an honest way and still affirm or praise a child's efforts.

Here are some examples of how you can encourage/affirm your child:

1. I like the way you coloured in the sun in that deep warm yellow.
2. That's the best face you've ever drawn – you remembered the eyes, the ears the mouth and the nose!
3. I can see this is difficult for you and I am so proud that you are trying again.
4. I love hearing you reading that story to your baby sister – and look how happy she is!
5. Yes, that is a 'B' just like in your name, Benjamin! I like the way you are thinking.
6. I know it's hard to find the right puzzle piece, but you are almost there.
7. You handled it really well when Grandma didn't listen to your story. Come sit here and tell it to me.
8. Look at how you helped each other – terrific teamwork!
9. Keep thinking ... keep thinking! ... I spy something that starts with /f/.
10. Yes, it is soccer today! Good remembering!
11. Yes, that is the sign for Pick n Pay. Good noticing!
12. Well done – what a beautiful m! Have you been practising your letters at school?
13. You're feeling really sad that Langa has gone to another school? Thank you for saying how you feel. You are really going to miss him, aren't you?
14. Its okay to make a mistake – making mistakes is part of learning!
15. Thank you for telling me all about it. I can see you have really thought about your drawing - well done!
16. Gosh, you listened really well – these are exactly the shoes I wanted! Thank you for fetching them!

## ★ Examples of emergent writing

 <p>1. Scribble stage (starting point at any place on the page)</p>	 <p>2. Scribble (left to right progression)</p>	 <p>3. Mock letters (can be personal or conventional)</p>	 <p>4. Letter string (left to right and progressively downward)</p>
 <p>5. Groups of letters with space in between to resemble words</p>	 <p>6. Picture labeling (matching beginning letter to sound)</p>	 <p>7. Copies environmental print</p>	 <p>8. Uses first letter of a word to represent the word</p>
 <p>9. Uses beginning letter and ending letter to represent the word</p>	 <p>10. Uses invented spelling and writes words with beginning, middle and ending letters</p>		



## Listening games to support emergent reading and writing

Here is a selection of different listening games to play with your children.

1. Break words up into parts or syllables and clap or jump for each syllable.
  - Examples: Za | ne | le (3 syllables). Si | mon (2 syllables).
  - More examples: po | ta | to; te | le | phone
2. Slow talk: ask your child to guess what word you are saying.
  - Example: Say “n-ose” and point to your nose; say “m-outh”; say “f-oot”.
3. Play ‘I spy’: one person starts by choosing something in the room or in a picture and saying the first sound of that object. Say, “I spy with my little eye, something beginning with ...”. The other players must guess the word. If you prefer, just say, “I’m thinking of something and it starts with ...”.
4. Choose a sound and see how many words you can think of starting with that sound. It is a good idea to start with /b/, /s/, /t/, /m/, /f/, /p/, /r/ as many things start with these sounds (e.g. bus, ball, butterfly, banana, beetroot, bag, beach, balloon, book).
5. Choose a sound and a category (such as food or girls’ or boys’ names) and see how many words you can think of that start with that sound (e.g. /c/ – cake, carrots, cauliflower, custard, cream, cabbage). Note: chocolate and cheese start with the sound /ch/ not /c/.
6. Ask your child to listen carefully.
  - Example: “Clap when you hear a word that starts with /m/: dog, bird, lion, man, pig, horse, moo, must.”


When playing these games, always start with easy tasks so that children succeed from the beginning.



- When you play ‘I spy’, you can start with parts of the body (mouth, nose, finger toes) or with children’s names, for example: “I spy with my little eye somebody special and his name starts with /s/” (Simpiwe).
- When you play, always praise the child for trying. If your child isn’t ready to play these games, just leave them for a while or play with older siblings so your child can listen and learn from them.



# ★ Alphabet chart

Aa  apple	Bb  bed	Cc  cat	Dd  dog
Ee  elephant	Ff  fish	Gg  gate	Hh  hat
Ii  inside	Jj  jump	Kk  key	Ll  lion
Mm  man	Nn  nest	Oo  oranges	Pp  pen
Qq  queen	Rr  radio	Ss  sun	Tt  table
Uu  umbrella	Vv  van	Ww  watch	Xx  x-ray
Yy  yo-yo	Zz  zebra	a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z	



## Games to play with the alphabet chart

Children in Grade R are naturally curious about letters. In the Stellar stories and activities, we start to show them that certain letters represent certain sounds. In other words, we show children that there is a link between the letters they see and the sounds they hear in words.

As parents, you can do the same at home. Here are a few games to play with the alphabet chart.

1. It is best to focus on beginning sounds in words, for example: "Your name starts with /b/. Yes /b/ for Benjamin!" (Be sure to use the letter sound, rather than the letter name.)
2. Point to each picture on the alphabet chart and ask your child to tell you what it is. Then ask what sound it starts with. Be patient and do not expect your child to get them all right. Learning to hear the sounds in words and linking these sounds to letters is not easy for young children. Start with a few pictures and build up gradually.
3. Look at the pictures on the alphabet chart, and say the word for each picture slowly, while you emphasise the beginning sound for example, sun. ssssun. Ask your child to name some pictures and say the beginning sound of the word.
  - Say a sound, and see if your child can match it with the correct letter on the alphabet chart.
  - Point to a letter on the alphabet chart, and ask your child to say the sound the letter makes.
  - Ask your child if he can recognise any letters from his name on the alphabet chart; look for an /m/ for mom or a /d/ for dad.
  - Choose a letter on the alphabet chart and write it with your finger on the palm of your child's hand. Ask your child to write the letter in the sand or in the air.
  - Choose a letter and then see how many examples of that letter your child can find on one page of a newspaper. Circle the letter.
  - Always remember that making mistakes is part of learning; we need to encourage our children to 'have a go'! When playing these games, always start with easy tasks so children succeed from the beginning.



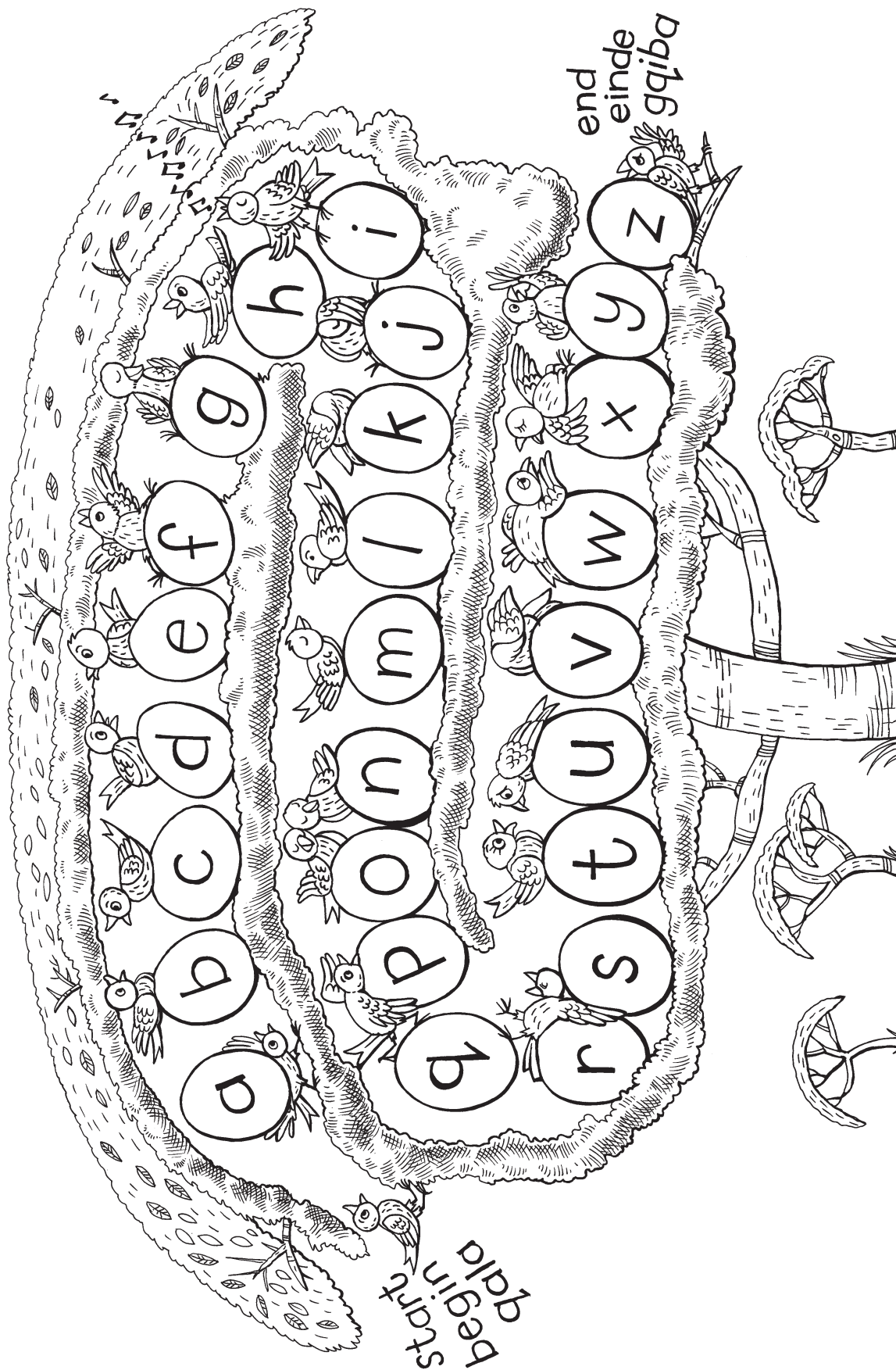
Children love to sing the alphabet song which uses the names of letters, BUT to be able to sound out words, they need to know and to use the sounds of the letters.



## Word bird game

### STEPS

1. Place the large game board on the carpet with two to three children seated around it.
2. Explain the rules to the children:
  - Children put their counters on Begin.
  - Each child takes a turn to throw the die and moves the counter the correct number of spaces following the path on the word bird tree.
  - When they land on a letter, they must say the sound that letter makes and name something that begins with that sound.
  - The first child to reach the end of the bird is the winner and the game is over.





## Inspirational messages

### Tips for using inspirational messages



On the next two pages, you will find messages you can use in different ways to inspire parents to be more involved in their children's learning. Be creative!

You can:

- send them home in each child's message book
- print them out and cut them up and ask each parent to pull one out of a container
- enlarge them, print on colourful paper and stick them up around the meeting room
- display them before a meeting and let each parent choose the one they like and speak about it
- select the ones that are relevant to each meeting and discuss them with the parents
- share them with your colleagues so that other teachers can also acknowledge and inspire their children's parents.



**You are your  
child's first  
teacher!**

**You are the wind  
beneath your  
children's wings.**

**IT ONLY TAKES A FEW  
MINUTES EVERY DAY TO  
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.**

**Young children who become used to listening  
carefully to sounds, and thinking about what they are  
hearing, grow into six-year olds who can more easily  
sound out and spell words.**

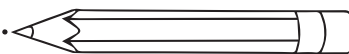


**READING OR TELLING  
STORIES IS LIKE BRUSHING  
TEETH - YOU NEED TO DO IT  
EVERY DAY!**

**Children are never  
too young or too old  
for stories.**

**Encourage your child to  
draw often and anywhere.**

**Children who have heard  
a lot of story language will  
start to use it in their play  
and in their writing.**



**WHEN WE READ WITH CHILDREN,  
THEY LEARN THAT WRITING  
IS SPOKEN WORDS WRITTEN DOWN.**

**Stories can help  
children explore  
their feelings.**

**Every time someone reads a story,  
children learn a little more about  
what it means to be a reader.**

**Children do important 'brainwork' when they think and draw and notice. Encouraging children to notice things is one of the ways we can help them to learn.**



**When I ask you to read to your child, I don't want it to sound like medicine, I want it to sound like CHOCOLATE!**

**When an adult loves a book, a child catches that feeling and is more likely to love books too.**



**When children draw, they are putting their ideas on paper. Drawing is the beginning of writing.**

**POINTING OUT WRITING ALL AROUND US HELPS CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WRITING IS FOR.**

**Parents can help by praising and encouraging children's attempts at drawing and writing.**



**Children learn that writing a message is a way of talking to someone who is not there.**

**When children make their own books, they are learning that all books have an author and that their own ideas and stories are important.**