

Dear Parents

This year your child is embarking on an exciting journey – learning to read. This letter gives you some information on our approach to teaching literacy, and how you can be part of it.

How will we teach your child to read?

We are using an evidence-based synthetic phonics approach to learning to read. This means that your child will learn phonics skills in a sequential and systematic way. They will learn the 44 sounds in the English language along with the letters that represent those sounds. As they learn new sounds and letters, they will apply this knowledge through reading enjoyable books called 'decodable books'.

What are decodable books?

Decodable books only contain words that can be read using the skills the children have been taught up to that point. For example, the first set of books the children read (in the program) is based on only needing to know the sounds for the letters **s a t p i n m d**. Only words using these sounds are used in the books (with the exception of a few 'tricky words' - words that all books need but are hard to sound out at this stage, eg *the*). For the next set of books, children also learn the sounds for the letters **g o b h e r f u l**. They continue in this way until all 44 sounds have been learnt, practising their new phonics knowledge as they go. As children progress higher up through the program, they learn different spellings for sounds they have already learnt.



Our books – introducing Sam, Dan and Nat

We are teaching literacy using the Sunshine Phonics Decodable program. The early books in this program are all based around a family of three children - Sam, Dan and Nat - along with their pets, their family, and their neighbourhood friends. Because the same characters recur in each book, children get to know them and look forward to reading about their adventures. The Sunshine Phonics Decodable books also have engaging illustrations, and feature situations and activities that will be familiar to children. Most importantly, the fun stories, often with a humorous ending, can be read using the phonics knowledge children have been taught up to that point, meaning there will be no need for them to take guesses at words. This ensures that every beginning reader experiences success in reading from their very first book.



How can you help your child?

Your child will bring home books to read. Each book practises the letters and sounds that have been taught at school. Here are some ideas of how you can support your child on their reading journey.



You could:

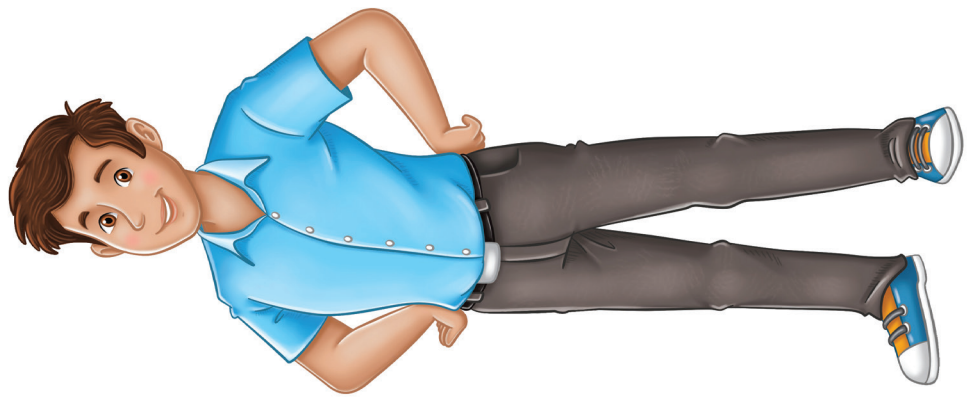
- Turn to the back page of the book - there are tips for discussion before reading the book, and for afterwards.
- Turn to the inside front cover of the book – it shows the sounds that your child is currently learning. Practise saying the sounds with them, while pointing to the letter. Practise reading the focus words that are listed – aim for your child to read the words straightaway if possible. If they can't, they can say each sound and then blend the sounds to make the word.
- **Tricky words** – on the inside front cover of the book you will also see some 'tricky words' listed. These are words in the book that are necessary to make stories (eg, *to*, *is*, *the*, *go*) but cannot yet be sounded out by your child with the phonics knowledge they have. Read these words to your child and ask them to repeat them back to you. You may have to read these words for your child when they meet them in the book.
- Have your child read the book to you. If they get stuck on a word encourage them to sound out each sound, and then blend the sounds together to read the word. Have them point to each word as they read.
- Talk about the story afterwards - ask questions about what happened in the story and why. Comprehension is a key part of learning how to read and to enjoy reading.
- You can cut out the book characters on the last page of this letter and use them with your child to retell the story and to make up new stories.
- Read other storybooks to your child, aiming to make it into an enjoyable routine.



We believe that while the process of reading is complex, the teaching of it does not need to be. The systematic approach of the Sunshine Phonics Decodable program ensures that every beginning reader experiences success in reading from their very first book! We hope your child enjoys learning to read with Sam, Dan and Nat, and all their friends.

Please feel free to ask us if you have any questions about our literacy program.
Warm wishes,

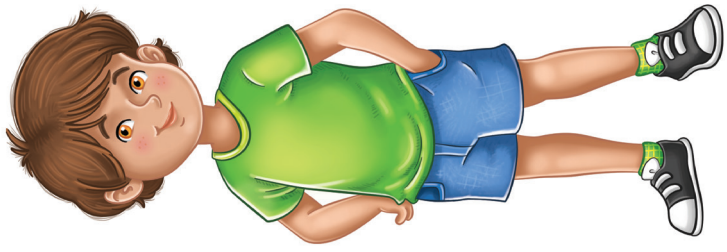




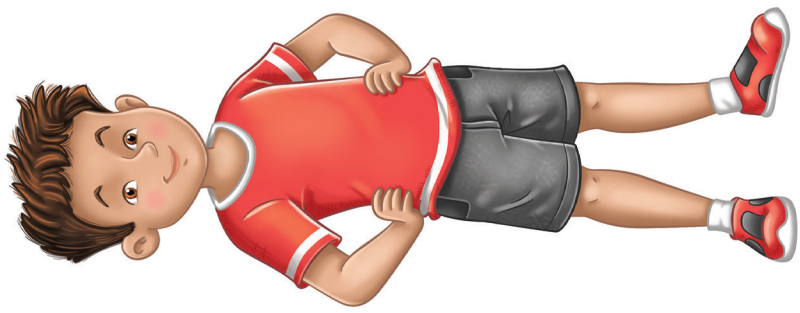
Dad



Mum



Dan



Sam



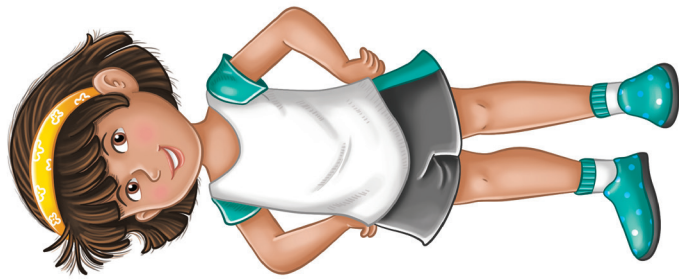
Gus



Pam



Sid



Nat