

Avoid common phonics teaching mistakes

It is vitally important that children understand phonics. If a child knows how the alphabet sounds and how to blend sounds they will be able to read up to 300+ words. They are then able to construct pronunciation themselves and read unfamiliar words without help.

However, a child's understanding of phonics is dependent upon practitioners' understanding and upon the learning opportunities the nursery provides. Children need to learn phonics in the right way, otherwise, it may not be picked up as quickly as it should be.



NDNA has put together a list of tips to avoid common mistakes we've seen in nurseries when it comes to teaching phonics:

- **Get the necessary training**
 - Without the correct training, teaching phonics can lead to practitioners saying the wrong sounds for each letter, e.g. "muh" instead of "mmm" for 'm'
 - It is much more difficult to correct the wrong pronunciation once learnt
 - Practitioners must teach the pure sound such as "nn" in net and not "en" or "buh" for 'b'. The "uh" sound is known as the 'schwa' sound and will confuse children when they try to blend and segment words later.
- **Consider continuous provision when creating phonics activities**
 - By embedding tools and resources across your setting you will be enabling children to explore phonics during their everyday play
 - Ensure it includes individual activities to support all children's levels of development and interests
 - Avoid having a Phonics Box that gets pulled out every now and again for a set, rigid phonics activity.
- **Support each individual child's stage of phonemic awareness**
 - NDNA has observed phonics activities where 10-12 children are all brought to sit on the carpet to take part and the activity turns out to be suitable for only 3-4 children
 - Planning smaller groups where all the children can be involved at their developmental level is more beneficial.
- **Ensure phonics is fun, play-based and offered through multi-sensory experiences**
 - This will help children to remain interested, motivated and actively involved in their learning.
 - Avoid providing only paper and pen based activities to promote phonics.

Find out more: Contact our training team on 01484 407070 or email training@ndna.org.uk