

Parent support materials

Introduction

English

Maths

Part 1

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Introduction

Welcome to the Prep **Parent support materials**.

Prep introduction

These Parent support materials include resources and practical ideas for getting started with supporting your student's learning@home.

The relevant year level Parent support materials can be printed (recommend in colour) and referred to when completing the [learning@home](#) **two-week units of work**.

They contain:

- English resources
- Maths resources
- Helpful information

The Parent support materials provide additional activities that can be used with the two-week units of learning provided by the Queensland Department of Education on the learning@home website. The Parent support materials could also be used as a standalone resource.



Play materials and resources

Prep students use play materials and a range of resources to support their learning. You may have some of the materials at home that you can collect and keep handy.



Learning materials

- Scrapbooks
- Clipboard (to hold paper, for example, when working outside, in the shed or in the car)
- Pencils, crayons, felt pens, marker pens
- Access to a computer, printer, word processing software and drawing program
- Mobile phone or tablet device
- Playdough (see recipe in this kit) and/or modelling clay
- Paints
- Thick and thin brushes
- Glue
- Scissors
- Sticky tape
- Variety of paper, card, cardboard and large art paper (some can be recycled)



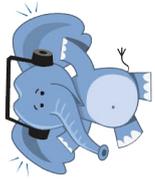
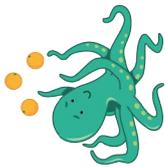
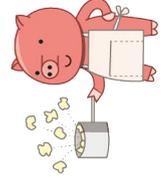
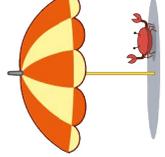
Collected materials

- A collection of collage materials (for example, cupcake papers, straw, cotton wool, iceblock sticks, cellophane, strips or pieces of fabric or leather, pasta, rice, clean egg shells, crepe paper, foil, wrapping paper, greeting cards, ice-cream lids, margarine containers and lids, rubber bands)

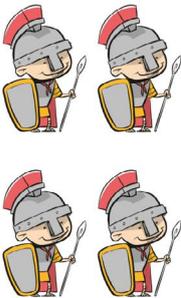
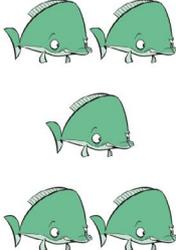
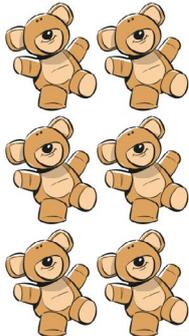
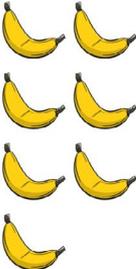
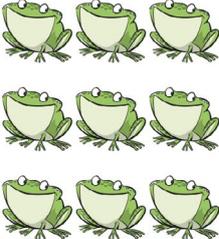
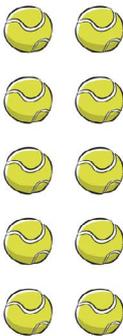


- A collection of natural materials (for example, pebbles, leaves, seed pods, shells, feathers)
- A collection of junk materials (for example, containers, egg cartons, cardboard cylinders, large boxes, recycled food packaging, old sheets, blankets, lids, carpet squares)
- Utensils (for example, butter knives, forks, spoons, shape or cookie cutters, rolling pin, garlic press, pastry edger, melon baller)
- Recycled drink bottles to store water paint
- Water and sand play collection — recycled (clean) plastic containers, bottles, jugs, cups, spoons, small shovel, large spade, buckets, sieves, hosing, trays, large box or piece of wood to be a shelf, tub or bucket to hold water, sponges, well-cleaned trigger-spray and squeeze bottles, hand pump, plastic vehicles, long offcuts of wood (to make bridges and roads)
- Dress-up clothes (for example, hats, aprons, bags, wallets, purses, clothes, scarves, shoes, bags, belts)
- Pretend play props (for example, dolls, baby clothes, bibs, real or toy plastic crockery, cutlery, cooking pans or utensils, tablecloth, table, chairs, doll cot, baby bottles, play cooking set)
- Everyday junk or re-usable materials (for example, large boxes, old keyboard, calculator, telephone, diary, clipboard, pillows, rope, paper, pens)
- Storage container or space (for example, box, laundry basket, washing line and pegs, coat hooks, shelf, cupboard to store materials)

Alphabet chart

 a A	 b B	 c C	 d D	 e E	 f F	 g G
 h H	 i I	 j J	 k K	 l L	 m M	 n N
 o O	 p P	 q Q	 r R	 s S	 t T	 u U
	 v V	 w W	 x X	 y Y	 z Z	

Number chart

0	1 	2 
3 	4 	5 
6 	7 	8 
9 	10 	

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Alphabet chart 2

aA bB cC dD eE fF gG



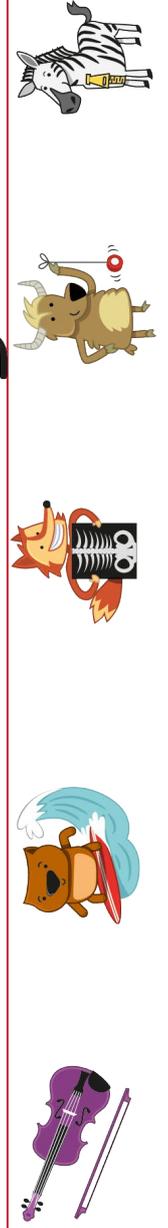
hH iI jJ kK lL mM nN



oO pP qQ rR sS tT uU



vV wW xX yY zZ



What will I do today?

The illustration shows a central boy with a thoughtful expression, his hand to his chin, with three red question marks above his head. The text "What will I do today?" is written in a white speech bubble around him. Surrounding this central figure are eight circular icons, each representing a different activity:

- Books, recorded stories, music CDs, DVDs:** An icon showing a stack of books, a CD, and a DVD.
- Puzzles:** An icon of a boy sitting at a table with puzzle pieces.
- Outdoor:** An icon of a girl sitting under a makeshift tent with a cricket bat and ball nearby.
- Games:** An icon of two boys playing a board game on a checkered board.
- Art:** An icon of a boy painting at a table with various art supplies.
- Pretending:** An icon of a boy in a yellow uniform standing next to a cardboard castle.
- Other:** A large red question mark icon.
- Construction:** An icon of two boys building with blocks and a toy car.

Art ideas: Painting

Cornflour paint (a thick paint)

1. Mix 2 tablespoons of cornflour with 1/4 - 1/2 cup of cold water to make the paint base.
2. Add 2 cups of boiling water and stir as the paint base thickens.
3. Divide paint base between containers, for example, margarine containers or cups.
4. Add food colouring or powder paint to make coloured paint.

Note: To thin paint, add cold water. Cover when storing. This paint keeps for a week in a cool place or the refrigerator.

Quick water paint (a watery paint)

1. Mix a small amount of powder paint (or food dye, acrylic paint or poster paint) with water.
2. Make three or four colours and place each colour in a separate container.

Note: Water paint can be stored for a month or even longer.

Hint: Make up a large volume of water paint in different colours and store in clean two-litre cordial or milk containers. When you need some paint, just tip a small amount into cups or small containers.

Whipped soap paint

1. Grate soap or use washing soap flakes.
2. Cover soap with water and soak for a few hours or overnight, until it goes soft and jelly-like.
3. Whip it with an electric beater. Add extra water if the paint is too thick or to increase the froth.

Optional: Add food dye or powder paint to colour the soap paint.

How to make a sponge brush

1. Cut a strip of foam or sponge.
2. Fold the sponge strip around an iceblock stick.
3. Wrap tightly with a rubber band or string to make a re-useable brush.

Ideas for painting

Your student can try using:

- paintbrushes of varying sizes, a pastry, shaving or sponge brush, small paint rollers, string dipped in paint
- cotton buds, eye-droppers, trigger-spray bottles or squeeze bottles
- straws, combs, feathers, toothbrush, iceblock sticks, marbles
- paint on different sized paper or types of paper.



Ideas for cornflour, acrylic and poster paints

- Fold and unfold a piece of paper. Place blobs of paint (using a spoon, brush or iceblock stick) on one side of the paper near the fold. Fold the paper over and then unfold it to make a 'butterfly'.
- Place some paint on a flat sponge. Press objects onto the painted sponge and then onto the paper to make a print.
- Paint using fingers on a table or serving tray. Make a print of the painting by pressing some paper onto the painting and lifting it off.



Ideas for water paint

- Water paint can be used with brushes, sponge brushes, cotton buds or eye-droppers.
- Place some paint in recycled spray bottles and spray a large sheet of paper pegged to a fence. (Paper can be used for collage, as wrapping paper or cards.)
- Put some water paint with extra water into a small bucket or tin (with no sharp edges). Paint outside fences, walls or sheds with a thick house-painting brush. This builds arm strength.
- Draw with wax or oil crayon, or a candle. Brush water paint over the drawing.
- Use water paint to colour water being used for water play, so the student can more easily see how much water is in the containers.



Ideas for whipped soap paint

- Finger paint on a tiled wall (for example, near the bath or shower), tray, piece of vinyl or table.
- Model with whipped soap — create the highest, flattest or widest mound, or divide the soap mound into pieces or shapes with hands or a spatula.



Asking open-ended questions

Open-ended questions have **more than one answer**. They help children learn to think, explain, plan, extend ideas, try new skills, manage a challenge, and solve problems.

Using open-ended questions will help students gradually become **more independent learners**, as they start to ask themselves questions and attend to important learning and discoveries.

Examples of open-ended questions

What have you been doing/making?

How has that idea/plan been working?

What seems to be the problem?

What might happen when/if you _____?

How did you know that _____?

Why did you choose/decide _____?

What else could you try/do?

Who could you ask to help you to _____?

What could you use that might help you to _____?

How could you find out about _____?

What if _____?

How might someone else think about / do that?

What did you notice when you _____?

Why do you think _____ happened?



Basic art ideas

Art activities allow children to develop fine motor skills, creativity, problem-solving and thinking skills. Use these ideas to help your child choose and complete play choices independently.

Collage

- Place glue in squeeze bottles (for example, cleaned tomato sauce bottles) with a cap to avoid waste and spills.
- Use paper glue to attach paper or light objects.
- Use PVA or woodworking glue to attach heavier objects (for example, pasta, rice, cardboard, iceblock sticks, boxes).
- Mix PVA or woodworking glue with paper glue to make a glue that sticks most objects and reduces cost.
- Provide other ways to join materials, for example, sticky tape, masking tape, staples, hole puncher and thread. Teach your child how and when to use the materials and how not to waste them.
- Use different bases for collage, for example, newspaper, wrapping paper, cardboard, fabric or hessian, boxes, large cut-out shapes.
- Change materials by cutting them into shapes or pieces, fringing the edge, scrunching them into balls or twisting.
- Add PVA glue to paint to add a new dimension to collage.



Painting

- Use different papers or bases for painting, for example, newspaper, wrapping paper, cardboard, fabric or hessian, boxes, large cut-out shapes.
- Paint with marbles or small balls. Place paper in a tray made using a cereal box with the back cut off. Dip marbles into paint and roll them across the paper.
- Paint with string dipped into paint. Attach thick pieces of string to pegs. Dip the strings into paint and drag them across the page.
- Paint using eye-droppers and water paint. Let paint drip onto plain paper.



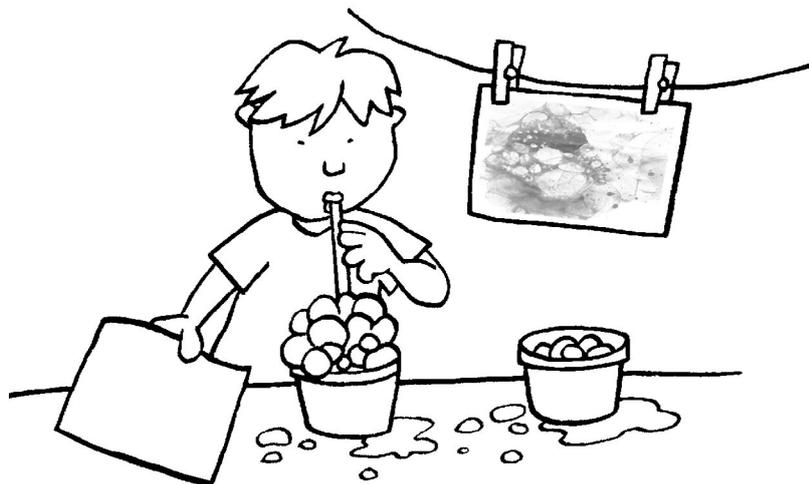
Printing

Objects you can print:

- Shapes cut from wood, cardboard or sponges, blocks, leaves, rocks, shells, feathers, fork, potato masher, fruits or vegetables (for example, orange, apple, carrot, potato cut in half or into a shape)

Ways to print:

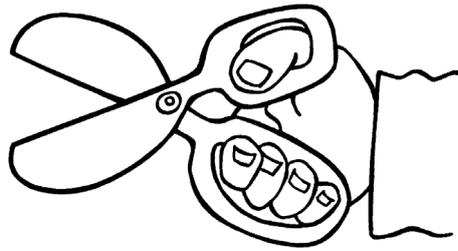
- Coat a sponge with paint. Press an object onto the sponge. Press the object onto paper and lift it to show the print.
- Paint the flat surface or edge of an object using a brush. Press the object onto paper and lift it to show the print.
- Wrap rubber bands or glue thick string onto a flat piece of wood or thick cardboard. Coat a sponge with paint. Press the wood or cardboard onto the sponge. Press the wood or cardboard onto paper and lift it to show the print.
- Add some detergent to water paint. Blow into the paint with a straw until the bubbles reach the top of the container (do not inhale the mixture). Place a piece of paper on the bubbles to make a print. Blow into a different coloured paint or bubble mix and print the bubbles.



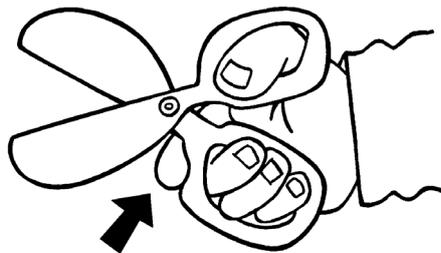
Cutting

Helping your child to cut accurately and smoothly with scissors

1. Provide scissors that suit your child's hand and their hand preference (left- or right-handed scissors).
2. Encourage your child to keep their upper body straight, facing the page and table, and their feet flat on the floor. Children who have poor upper-body strength may try to anchor their body by hooking an arm over the back of the chair, or placing their lower arm or the lower edge of the scissors on the table to try to keep themselves stable.
3. Encourage your child to keep their thumb on the top, so the scissors don't turn and their wrist doesn't bend or twist.
4. If your child lifts their elbow out to the side, their hand and scissors will turn and they will have less control. Tell your child to bring their elbow in near their body to keep their wrist, hand and scissors straight.



5. If your child often turns their wrist and the scissors, encourage them to place their index finger in front of the lower finger hole. This should make cutting easier.



6. Encourage your child to keep their thumb and fingers still in the finger holes rather than extending them out as they open the scissors.
7. Help your child to locate a suitable starting point, especially if they are cutting out a shape or picture in the centre of a page. For example, show your child how to start from the nearest edge and cut to the nearest line.
8. Repeat the words 'open' and 'shut' in a slow steady way to help your child maintain a smooth cutting rhythm.
9. If your child is cutting a curve or turning around a corner, encourage them to keep their hand and body still and use their support hand (non-cutting hand) to turn the page. Say the words 'turn the paper' to prompt your child to turn the paper rather than changing the angle of their scissors and wrist.

Building hand, arm and upper-body strength and control

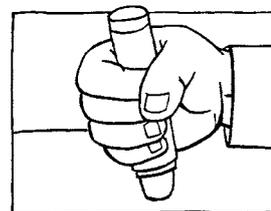
1. Build your child's hand and finger strength through games, for example, squeezing dough or clay, a firm ball, trigger-spray bottles ,and old shampoo or detergent bottles filled with water.
2. Play games involving gripping, for example, hanging by their hands from a monkey bar or rope.
3. Build your child's upper-body control and strength through games, for example, bat and ball games, using monkey bars, swinging by their arms, playing tug-of-war games, digging using a spade and lifting buckets of sand.

Holding a pencil

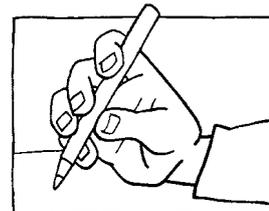
During the Prep year, children develop their ability to control a pencil and other writing or drawing tools.

- Watch how your child holds the pencil so you can prompt them to move to the next developmental stage when they are ready.
- Your child may be able to attempt a more mature grip for a short time, but will often go back to using a less mature grip if their strength and control are not fully developed.
- It will not help your child to force them to hold a pencil correctly. Their pencil grip will develop over time with encouragement and as they build strength and control.

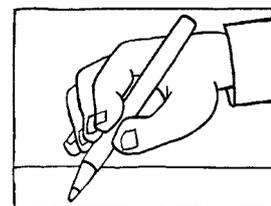
- **Initial grip** — Pencil is held tightly in a fist-like grip. Fingers grip around the pencil with the thumb wrapped or resting on top of the fingers. The pencil is often straight up and down.



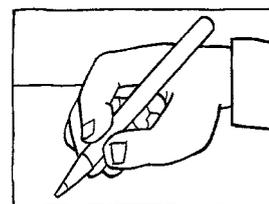
- **Early grip** — One or more fingers and the thumb are wrapped around the pencil, or the pencil is held by all finger pads/joints and the thumb joint/pad (not tip). Hand moves stiffly.



- **Transitional grip** — The pencil is held between the thumb tip and two or three fingertips/pads. The pencil rests on the webbing between the thumb and index finger. The whole hand moves in a stiff action.



- **Correct grip** — The pencil is held between the thumb tip and index finger. The pencil rests near the joint of the middle finger. Fingers, hand and wrist move freely.



To help your child develop pencil control:

- provide thick pencils, crayons or pens, then gradually reduce the thickness of the tools, for example, medium thickness and finally standard pencil thickness
- allow your child to build their hand strength, for example, gripping and swinging on monkey bars or ropes, digging with a sandpit shovel, squeezing water from shampoo or detergent bottles, and using trigger-spray containers
- help your child to develop hand and finger control; allow them to cut and glue small objects, use construction sets, and manipulate puzzle and game pieces.

How to make word slides

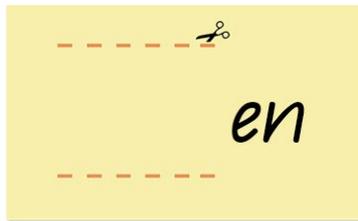
What you need

- A piece of card (approximately 15 cm × 10 cm) for each 'word ending' card
- A strip of card (approximately 5 cm × 30 cm) for the 'beginning letters' strip

What to do

1. Make 'word ending' cards.

Write a word ending on the right side of each card and cut two slits in the card, for example:



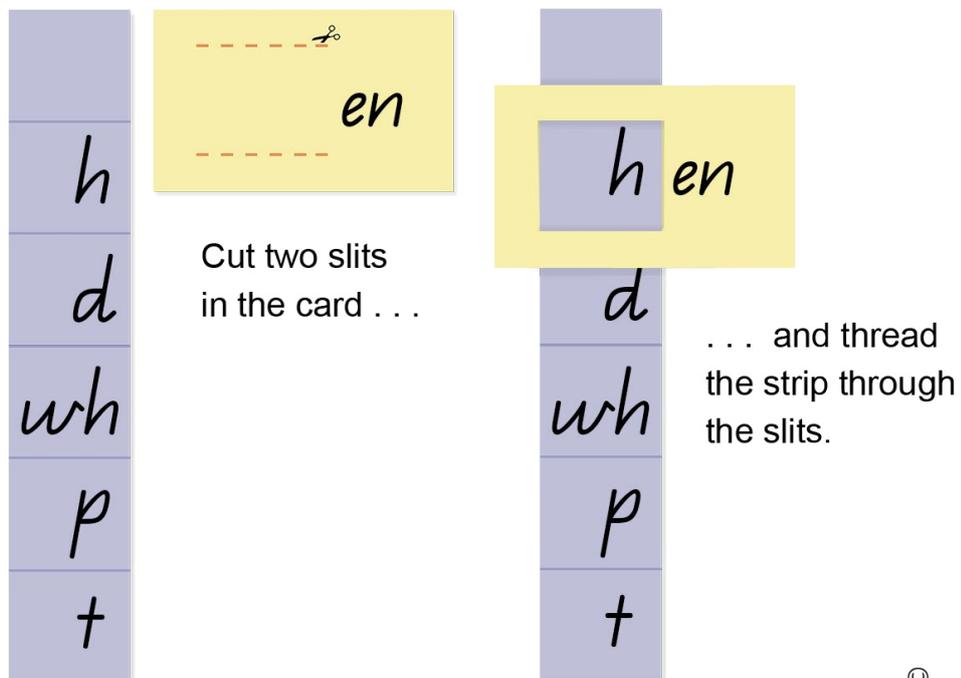
2. Make a 'beginning letters' strip.

Write letters that can be used to make words with the word endings.

3. Create new words.

Thread the strip through the slits in a card and have students read the words that are created.

To make the word slide:



Create a word wall

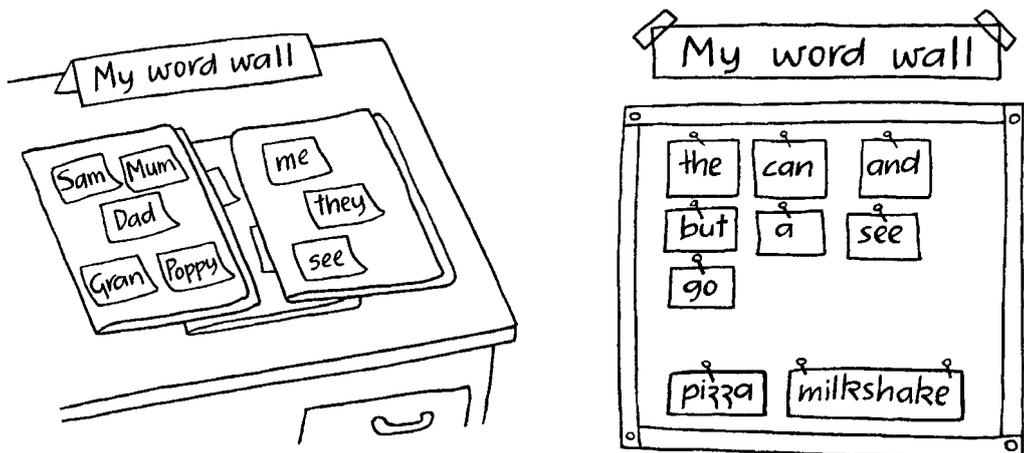
What is a word wall?

A word wall is a display of useful words that students are interested in or need to use when they write.

It is usually made by printing words clearly (using the Beginner's Alphabet) on pieces of card or paper, so students can copy words when they are writing.

How to create a word wall at home

Word walls can be developed as a display on a wall, curtain, pin board or fridge. Make sure the display can be seen easily by students when writing.



Add new words gradually (one or two at a time) when students ask how to write a word or need to use it for a reason, for example, to write an email or letter, or make a book or sign.

Allow students to help choose words to place on the word wall, so they are more likely to use the words. Some types of words to include on a word wall are:

- names of family, friends, pets and toys
- words students ask to write often, for example, 'Mum', 'Dad', 'friend', 'love', 'dear', 'from', 'like', 'went', 'chocolate', 'pizza', 'football', 'dancing' or their address and phone number
- words related to topics of interest that students like to write about, for example, animal names, make-believe, book or TV characters, places they go often
- words that can be used to build sentences, for example, 'was', 'saw', 'went', 'see', 'I', 'to', 'a', 'the', 'me', 'she', 'he', 'we', 'this', 'you', 'they', 'and', 'can', 'go', 'here', 'there', 'want'
- words students use during learning, for example, words related to shops, restaurants, cooking, doctors.

Learning through play

Play is enjoyable and provides many opportunities for children to learn actively by using materials and working with others.

How do children learn best through play?

Children learn best when:

- another person interacts with them, even for a short time, to point out learning, help them to improve skills or add new ideas
- materials are carefully selected and a little challenging
- they have choices and can decide what to do and how to do it
- they take time to talk about what they have found out and learned
- they can develop or extend new ideas and skills
- they can try a variety of indoor and outdoor play activities
- their play is not interrupted and is viewed as important and valuable.

What can children learn through play?

Through play, children become ready for later learning as they:

- talk clearly and listen to others
- explore early reading and writing
- use their imagination and think of new possibilities
- create and construct in different ways
- count and explore early mathematical ideas
- learn to experiment and test ideas
- solve problems
- plan and organise themselves, materials and space for learning
- learn to be independent and responsible
- use technology (computers and everyday tools)
- learn about the natural and man-made world
- find out about themselves and others
- move with control and strength
- control tools and equipment (for example, pencils and scissors)
- learn to stay healthy and safe
- find out about their community and other people
- learn ways to work with others positively and manage conflicts
- learn to appreciate differences in people.

How can I help children learn through play?

You can:

- allow the Prep child to choose the direction of the play
- look for and value the learning that is part of children's play
- provide interesting everyday and play materials
- talk about or encourage new ways to use materials
- talk with them about what they are doing and why
- encourage them to manage challenges and new situations
- show them a new skill or explain an idea in the context of the play
- encourage them to think of and try out alternative or new ways to do things
- encourage the Prep child to try different types of play
- join in play with the child, even for a short time, but follow the lead of the child
- encourage other children to sometimes join in with their play
- encourage them to explain their feelings to others in socially challenging situations.

Learning through projects

The mini-project units provide a range of short projects for students to investigate (usually across one day). Students can also plan their own projects, with the support of you and their teacher, to explore topics, events and issues of interest to them, for example, a family event or local event.

How do projects help students to learn?

Projects allow students to have more say in what and how they learn, and help them to:

- build understandings about their world
- build skills for investigating and solving problems
- transfer learning to new situations
- develop thinking and decision-making skills
- develop positive feelings about learning
- develop perseverance and skills for managing challenges
- become more independent as learners.

What does learning through a project involve?

Completing a project involves:

- making a plan
For example: deciding what they want to know and how they will find out, what materials or help they will need, where they will work and/or how they will work with others
- investigating
For example: conducting experiments, collecting information, designing and constructing, asking others, reading books, viewing websites or DVDs, asking questions and solving problems
- reflecting on and sharing learning.
For example: drawing, taking a photograph, writing with support (a diary, email or book) to share what they found out or did, or want to know more about

Some examples of projects

An example of a mini-project (one-day activity):

Students may investigate objects that float and sink, and use this knowledge in a *Let's play!* activity as they make a boat.



Examples of student-chosen projects (negotiated with the teacher):

After watching a DVD about a clown fish, students might use a website to find out why clown fish do not get stung by anemones and paint a picture to show something else they found out.



After going camping with their family, students could decide to learn how to make damper and set up a pretend camping game.



Students could investigate how to rearrange a room so they can leave their buildings or constructions up without them being 'in the way' and protecting them from being knocked down.



How to help students to learn during a project

You can help students to learn as they complete a project by:

- helping them to plan, investigate and reflect on their learning
- providing information and guiding learning
- asking open-ended questions and prompting thinking
- prompting them to organise their time, space and materials
- helping them to make links between existing learning and new learning
- encouraging other people (children or adults) to become involved in the project
- having fun learning with the students.

Learning to learn

To be a successful learner throughout life, children need to know how to learn and how to talk about learning. Our world is constantly changing, so children need to know **how** and **when** to **change** their **ways of learning** to keep up with changes in their world.

Because information is constantly changing, it is less important for children to know particular facts or ideas. It is more important for children to:

- want to learn, enjoy learning, be curious and willing to find out
- know how to learn or find out
- know how to think about and use information in useful ways
- understand that it is okay to not know
- feel confident that they can find out
- know it is okay to be unsuccessful or make mistakes and be willing to have another go (be resilient and persevere)
- know how to work with others to find out.

How to help students learn how to learn

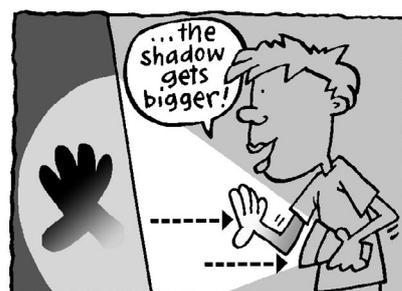
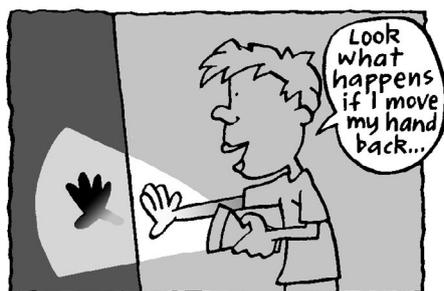
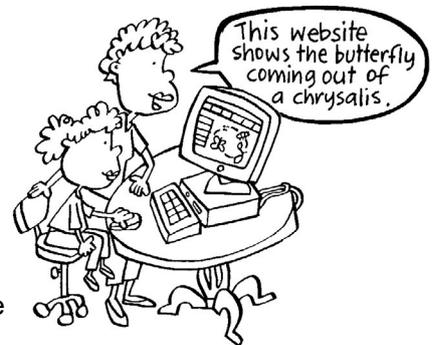
You can help Prep students begin to learn how to learn by **talking out loud** and **showing** them how to:

1. Choose a way to investigate that suits the situation or problem, for example:

- use a website to find factual information or a picture
- work with an adult to use a tool or machine, or learn to play an instrument
- experiment with materials to make a model.

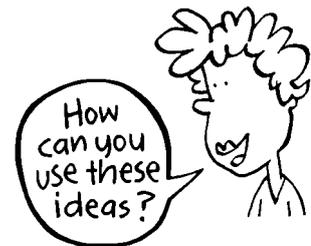
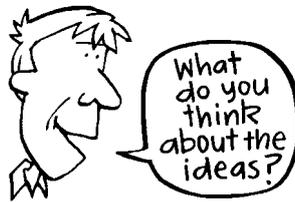
2. Use different ways to find out, for example:

- use their senses
- watch, talk, ask questions
- work with a person who has particular skills or knowledge
- use texts (books, DVDs, CDs, brochures, maps, websites, etc.)
- conduct experiments and investigate
- make links between one situation (or idea) and another.



3. **Talk about information and learning**, for example, you could ask:

- *Why? Why do you think that? Why do you think this happened?*
- *What have you found out?*
- *What do you already know?*
- *How can you put the ideas together?*
- *Which ideas are useful/important?*
- *Which ideas sound true/accurate?*
- *Which ideas don't sound right/true?*
- *What do you think about the ideas?*
- *What do these ideas mean to you?*
- *How can you use these ideas?*
- *What else do you need to know?*
- *How can you tell others about what you found out?*
- *How did you find out? What other ways could you find out / find out more?*



4. **Solve problems**, for example:

- work out exactly what the problem is
- find the parts of the problem
- work out the steps that will help solve the problem (what needs to be done)
- check how you are going or what you are finding out, as you work
- decide when the problem is solved
- know when to try new ways or ideas to solve the problem
- know when or how to work with others
- talk about how you solved the problem and decide what worked or didn't work.



5. **Use and share learning in different ways**, for example:

- explain, justify, convince or help another person
- share ideas, feelings and points of view with others
- explore ideas by drawing, painting or writing (email, letter, list)
- use ideas in games and play
- imagine, construct, build and pretend.

6. **Work with others to learn and find out**, for example, how to:

- work out what each person will do, what each person is good at or needs help with
- explain and listen to each others' ideas and feelings
- ask for help
- ask clear questions
- check how each person is going or feeling
- check ideas or what has been found out
- decide together what else needs to be done and who will do it.

Playdough

What you need

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 cup salt
- 4 tablespoons cream of tartar
- Optional: food colouring
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- Large bowl
- Wooden spoon
- Airtight container, for example, ice-cream tub with lid

What to do

1. Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Optional: add the food colouring to the boiling water
3. Very carefully pour in the boiling water.
4. Add the oil and stir until the ingredients are mixed and form a sticky dough.
5. Leave it to cool. Once cooled, knead vigorously for a few minutes until the dough loses its stickiness. (Add a little more flour if necessary.)
6. Store in an airtight container in the fridge.

Ideas for using playdough

1. Prompt students to use their **hands** in different ways. For example:
 - press down, flatten, smooth, knead and pound a large amount of dough
 - poke, pinch, pull, stretch and twist dough
 - roll dough into thick or thin 'snakes' and different sized balls
 - flatten balls or 'snakes' to make thin and thick shapes
 - wind 'snakes' of dough into flat spirals or coils (like snails), or spiral towers or pots.
2. Use **utensils** or **objects** to change the shape and texture of the dough. For example:
 - use a blunt or plastic knife, rigid spatula, or string or fishing line to cut dough or cut around objects (for example, their hand, a shell or jar lid)
 - use a fork, chopsticks, ice-cream sticks or toothpicks to mark dough
 - use a rolling pin, or press with an ice-cream lid, to flatten dough
 - use a potato masher, garlic press, grater or pastry edger
 - use natural materials (for example, shells, twigs, leaves, pebbles) to press into dough
 - use biscuit or shape cutters, plastic cups, lids or containers to cut out shapes
 - press or roll objects in dough (for example, edge of a plastic lid, plastic animals or cars) to make 'tracks' or marks.

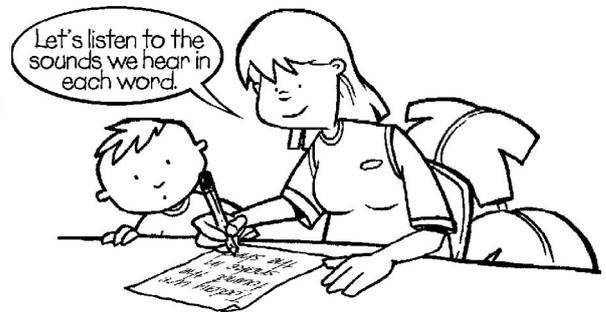
3. Create **pretend games** using playdough. For example:
 - use cooking trays, bowls, plates, cupcake papers and dough to make food for a pizza shop, bakery, fruit and vegetable store, meal, party or picnic
 - make animals (for example, use toothpicks for legs) in a zoo, jungle or sea
 - make people, houses, castles or nests with eggs
 - use plastic animals, dinosaurs or people and/or shells, rocks and twigs to make an imaginary land, city, zoo, beach or underwater world.
4. Sing **songs** or tell **stories** with dough. For example:
 - model dough to make characters or objects and sing songs such as 'Five little ducks', 'Five currant buns', 'Ten fat sausages', 'Humpty Dumpty', 'Hickory Dickory Dock' and other familiar songs or rhymes
 - make characters or scenes to tell stories (for example, 'Gingerbread man', 'Three billy goats gruff') or make up stories about animals, the lost seed or dinosaurs.
5. Use dough to **revisit learning**. For example:
 - make shapes or marks in dough and count or name the shapes, put shapes into order from biggest to smallest, or thickest to thinnest, or make pictures by combining different shapes
 - make an object using dough and then talk about the sound or letter at the start of the word or name of the object (for example, make a nest and talk about /n/ for 'nest')
 - play with sounds or make up tongue twisters about objects made from dough (for example, 'Silly Sammy snake sat on a sock' or 'Tilly turtle tried to talk').

Talking as you write

It is important to **model** some **writing** for Prep children **every day**. As you write, it is important to talk aloud about what you are doing and why. Children use this talk to help them begin to explore writing.

How should I talk about writing?

- Every time you write, talk about one or two ideas about words or sentences.
- Don't talk about every letter, sound or word, as the children may switch off or get confused.
- Make links to what the children already know about a letter, sound or word, or letters or words they have seen before.
- Talk about things with letters and words that interest the children.
- You could talk about:
 - some of the **main letters and sounds** you hear as you write
 - letters or sounds that the children know, for example, letters in their name
 - the **beginning** sounds or letters of some words
 - some of the **middle** and **end** letters or sounds that are easy to hear or the children have seen before, for example, double letters like 'ee', or letters that work together like 'ck' or 'sh'
 - where words are **written** already (in books, on calendars, word charts or cards), so they can be **copied**
 - **why** you are writing, for example, to list the activities we will do this morning.
- As you write, encourage the children to talk aloud or ask questions about the letters, sounds and words.
- Read back the writing to the children and point to the words as you read. This helps the children understand that what they say can be written down and read.



An example

Note: When you see a letter marked with forward slashes // it means to say the sound the letter makes, for example, /s/ means to say the sound 'ssss'.

You are writing this sentence with the class:

Today we will play outside.

Here are some things you could talk about:

- *I need to write the first word 'Today' / the last word 'outside'.*
- *Can you hear /t/ at the beginning of the word 'today'? The letter 't' (point to the **Alphabet chart**) says /t/ like 'table' and 'toy'.*
- *The word 'outside' has two parts — 'out' and 'side'.*
- *I need a capital at the start of the sentence.*
- *When I finish a word, I leave a space before I write the next word.*

- The word 'we' is a short word. It has two letters.
- I can copy the word 'play' from this book, 'Play with me'.
- 'Will' starts like William's name.
- 'We' and 'will' start with the letter 'w'.
- I have finished writing that idea, so I need a full stop.

How will children use these ideas to write?

When children start to write, they will start saying to themselves the same sorts of things to help them write. For example:

- What letter is at the beginning/end/middle of the word?
- Is that sound/letter in a word I know?
- I need to start with a capital letter.
- I am finished that idea. I'll write a full stop.
- I need a space so people can see the next word is starting.
- I can copy my friend's name from her name card.



Children's early writing might not look like writing.

It may include scribbles, lines, shapes, letter-like symbols, number-like symbols and copied letters, numbers and words.

How can children start writing?

Encourage children to play with writing and ideas about writing **every day, all year long**. They can:

- pretend to write when playing
- copy letters or mark paper with shapes and lines and call it 'writing'
- write on paper or forms while you are working, at the bank or writing a shopping list
- start a journal (scrap paper stapled together) and write every day.

How to talk about children's writing

- Ask children to tell you what they wanted their writing to say, for example: *It is supposed to say, 'This is Mum.'*
- Ask them to tell you how they wrote, copied or traced the letters.
- They may like you to write, underneath the writing, what they wanted the writing to say.

You can read to the child what you write. For example: If they write and says it means 'I like you', you can write and read the words 'I like you' under their writing.

Using information texts

An information text uses words, pictures and/or sound to tell about a topic or how to do something. Information texts include recipes, instructions, factual books, brochures, documentaries (on TV or DVD), maps, information on packaging, signs, CD-ROMs, websites, organisers or calendars, and timetables.

Why use information texts?

Using information texts with your student helps them to learn about and become more interested in:

- **their world** and how it works
- **how to find and talk about information**
For example: knowing when or how to use the contents or index page, the key on a map, or captions or labels on pictures
- different ways information is shared.
For example: diagrams, sketches, graphs, moving or still images or photographs, written and spoken words



Ways to help your student learn about information texts

You can help your student learn about information texts by:

- talking out loud about **how**, **why** and **when** to use particular information texts
- talking out loud about **where information is located**
- talking out loud about **how** the **information is organised** in different texts



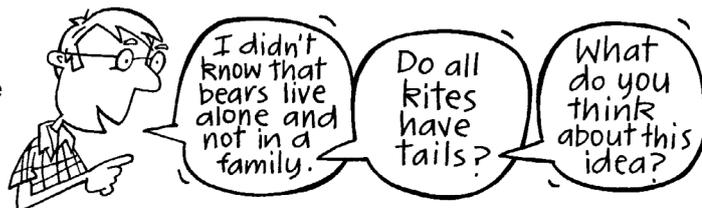
- encouraging them to use **different types of texts** to find out more about topics or questions of interest to them, or how to make or do things
For example: billboards, food packaging, brochures, fact sheets, maps, instruction sheets, recipes, plans, websites, CD-ROMs, DVDs, television or radio programs



- encouraging them to **make links** between their **experiences** and **information texts**



- talking and **asking questions** about the information or ideas in texts



- helping them to **share what they found out** by talking, drawing pictures, maps or diagrams, making a list or taking a photograph and writing a caption



- talking about **whether information is accurate** or comparing information from different texts.



For example: a book and a brochure, or a website and a DVD