

# A parent asked us....

“Do you teach phonics here?

**Amina’s friend sits down every day at her nursery and learns her phonics”**

*The idea of this column is to say how we replied to a question from a parent on the spot. So, the answers are not exhaustive, but enough to respond to the query in the moment.*

Adam is Amina’s key person. One day, Amina’s mum asked him this question at pick up time. This is how Adam answered:

“No, we don’t teach phonics in that way here. That approach is meant for children in reception. Here we help the children get ready for that. Supporting their language is a very important step. That means chatting, playing and sharing books with children every day”

“We also sing songs or say rhymes that the children know well but use different words – often made up or silly words. They find this funny, and it puts the focus onto sounds. They also enjoy using percussion instruments with the new words.”

Adam then, essentially, said, “But phonics is only one aspect of learning to read - there’s so much more to it. These are some of the other things we do here... ”

Adam talked about how we prioritise:

- *fostering a love of books*: sometimes staff dress up, use puppets, or put on different voices for the characters to make story time exciting. We find that children often want to hear the same book again and again – and that’s good for them.
- having lots of *back and forth conversations* with children as they play.

Finally, Adam explained that Ofsted don’t expect to see phonic lessons in pre-reception settings.

Amina’s mum was interested to hear that phonics isn’t the ‘be all and end all’ and said she’d love Amina to get into reading. She said she’d support the nursery’s work at home.

**Further info:**

EEF’s [Preparing for literacy report](#) : Improving Communication and Literacy in the Early Years.

EEF’s Early Years Toolkit: [Early literacy approaches](#)



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