

Letters and Sounds

Establishing the Foundation for Reading

presented by:

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Letters and Sounds - Establishing the Foundation for Reading

- Introductions
- Why children are struggling
- Best practices when teaching the alphabetic principle
 - picture mnemonics
 - letter sounds
 - lower case letters
- Logical Letter Formations
- Assessment
- Phonological Awareness
- Summary and Questions

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Report of the National Reading Panel (Apr. 2000) Reports of the Subgroups

An essential part of the process for beginners involves learning the alphabetic system, that is, letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns, and learning how to apply this knowledge in their reading (pg. 2-89)

... knowledge of the alphabetic system contributes greatly to children's ability to read words in isolation or connected text. (pg. 2-90)

Findings provided solid support for the conclusion that systematic phonics instruction makes a bigger contribution to children's growth in reading than alternative programs providing unsystematic or no phonics instruction. (pg. 2-92)

To be effective, systematic phonics instruction introduced in kindergarten must be appropriately designed for learners and must begin with foundational knowledge involving letters and phonemic awareness (pg. 2-93)

... systematic phonics instruction is significantly more effective than non-phonics instruction in helping to prevent reading difficulties among at risk students and in helping to remediate reading difficulties in disabled readers. (pg. 2-94)

What the experts are saying

Dr. Reid Lyon, Chief, National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).
Commenting on a PBS series, Children of the Code, stated:

"Phonics is absolutely essential. Non-negotiable"

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NAEYC POSITION STATEMENT 2009

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs
Serving Children from Birth to Age 8

"Prevention of reading difficulties is far less difficult and expensive than remediation."

Snow, C.E., M.S. Burns & P. Griffin, 1998,
Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children.
Washington DC: National Academies Press

"Nearly one out of three BC kindergarten students starts school vulnerable in terms of development and learning."

BC Ministry of Education, EduFacts, April 2009

"2/5 of our population does not have sufficient reading skills to do everyday tasks."

BC Ministry of Education 2009/10 Service Plan

Why do so many students struggle with reading?

#1 - memory problems

- lots of repetitions
- focus on key skills

#2 - visual concrete learners - auditory abstract skills

- provide a visual concrete connection to the letter sounds

Pictorial Mnemonics for Phonics

Linnea C. Ehri, Nancy D. Deffner and Lee. S. Wilce
University of California, Davis

As printed in
Journal of Educational Psychology, 1984, Vol. 76, No. 5,
p. 880 - 893

"The superiority of the integrated-picture group over the disassociated-picture group indicates that only one type of picture works, namely, one that links the shape of the letter to its sound." (p. 891)

Teaching Letter-Sound Connections With Picture Mnemonics:
Itchy's Alphabet and Early Decoding
Kim Dilorenzo, Carlotta Rody, Jessica Bucholz and Michael Brady
Preventing School Failure, 55(1), 28-34, 2011

Things to watch for in alphabet books and programs:

- the cue is the letter with parts added to it
- the picture cue is a name
- the picture cue words begin with a blend
- the program is developed on a theme
- fonts that use confusing letter forms
- upper case letters
- long and irregular vowel sounds and patterns
- a chant - p, p pig /p/

#3 - we are setting children up to struggle with our 'societal traditions'

•letter names -the ABC song

•upper case letters - children print name in capitals

These are typically what parents introduce at home

Upper Case Lower Case

- I
 - names
 - emphasis
 - environmental signs
 - acronyms
 - titles
 - beginning a sentence
 - forms
 - puzzles
- READING
 - PRINTING

Upper Case/Lower Case

•why teach 52 formations when 26 will suffice

•lower case far outnumber upper case on a page of print

•many misconceptions about the importance of teaching upper case first

1. upper case letters are what children are first exposed to in environmental print

2. Upper case letters are more distinctive

E F e f

M W m w

D P R B d p r b

C G O Q c g o q

I J L T i j l t

3. Upper case letters are easier

Upper Case and Lower Case are exactly the same

Cc Oo Pp

Ss Vv Ww

Xx Zz

Upper Case and Lower Case are very similar

Bb Ii Jj

Kk Ll Tt

Uu Yy

Upper Case and Lower Case are combinations of straight and curved lines

Aa Dd Ee Ff

Gg Hh Mm

Nn Qq Rr

Upper Case:

•have more slant lines - 11/7

•require children to lift and relocate their pencil more frequently - 17/6

•are all the same size

We tend to remember best what we learn first - isn't it sensible, then, to teach children what they most need to learn first?

Letter Names Letter Sounds

- oral spelling
 - ABC's/song
 - long vowels
 - alphabetical order
 - Bingo
- READING
 - SPELLING

There are 8 letter names that help children remember the sound

b d j k p t v z

The remaining 18 letter names do not help children to remember the sound

c g h q r u w y

a e i o

f l m n s x

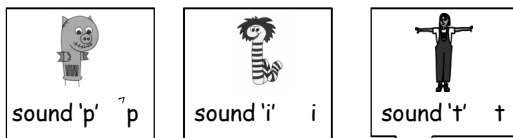
Letter Names can be confused with Concepts/Words in a child's vocabulary

a - eh	
b - bee, be	m - m & m's
c - see	o - oh, oh-oh
d - Dee, Dee-Dee	p - pea, pee
e - e i e i o	q - cue, queue
f - 'f' word	r - are, our
g - gee	t - tea, tee, cross
i - eye, I	u - you
j - Jay, blue jay	y - why
k - Kay, 'kay' (okay)	x - X-ray, cross

Memory Overload



p i t



p i t
"talk sounds"

"We can no longer ignore the fact that children need sounds and lowercase letters BEFORE they need letter names and capitals in order to transition from non-reader to reader as easily and successfully as possible."

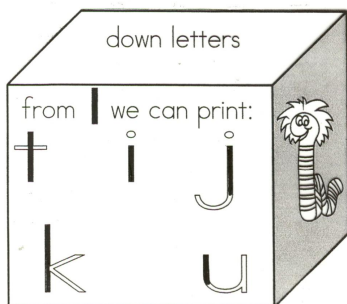
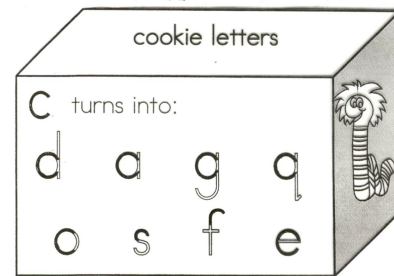
Are you Still Teaching Letter Names? Wallace Howard and Ellen F. Solbakken as published in SEEN magazine, Spring 2010, Vol. 12.1 pg. 46 - 48.

For young children, knowing letter sounds is the most essential pre-reading skill, opening the door to literacy. Traditional alphabet books teach letter names, not letter sounds. After memorizing the names, many youngsters find the extra steps required to learn letter sounds both frustrating and confusing.

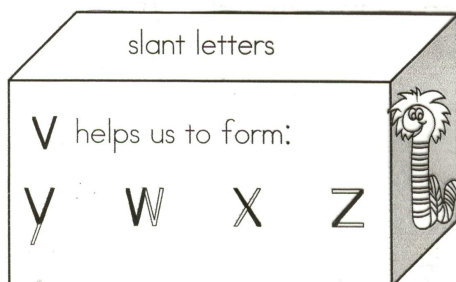
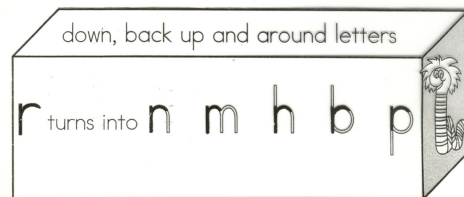
Abadaba Alphabet by Sheila Moore

Printing

- even our struggling students can learn to print properly
- practice makes perfect - if they practice letters improperly, they just get better at doing them wrong
- printing improperly is a bad habit to break
- interlined paper gives children visual cues to help with letter placement



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Drill and Practice

- decodable books
- sight word practice
- keep it interactive
- keep it fun

Communication

- with staff - utilize whatever support staff is available to help with at-risk students, drill and practice and early intervention
- with pre-schools - share information on lower case letters and letter sounds
- with parents - may need to teach proper letter sounds and letter formations

Skills

- blends and digraphs
- long vowels/magic e
- irregular vowels/consonants
- syllables, prefixes, suffixes
- comprehension