

Hello Parents and Caregivers,

Learning Disabled/Dyslexic readers need 500-1500 repetitions done correctly to get words into memory. Non- LD children need less than 500 repetitions. A fabulous book to read is *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz.

These are the elements of what students need to be successful readers.

() this indicates sound

1. **Phonological Development**

- A. They need to know how to blend sounds presented orally. Example (r- a- t) is the word rat. Each sound unit is called a phoneme. Some phonemes are written with 2 letters, ex. or, ch, ee,
- B. They need to know how to segment the sounds in words. Example in the word big, they need to hear the individual sounds (b- i- g). If children cannot do these things, we need to work on these skills. At home, you can present 2-3-4 sound words for them to blend together and segment as you drive to and from someplace. As they get better, add in words with more sounds.
- C. Rhymes- the ending sounds are what makes the rhyme.

All phonological activities are ones we do with what we *hear*. You could do all these activities in the dark.

2. **Alphabetic principle**

A. Each sound heard is represented by a letter. Some sounds have more than one way to write it. We are very careful to say each sound as “pure” as we can- no extra vowel sounds associated with it. Example: (m, v, z) are easy, but it is hard to remember that the sound d makes is (d), with our jaw not moving much not something that sounds like (duh). The sound of (r) at the beginning of a word is no (er), but a more pure (r). Think of this example: Is the word red pronounced as (er- e-d)? no, it is (r-e-d).

B. After the sound is matched to the letter name, we can write the letters. The letters should become so automatic, that whatever letter sound is said, the child can immediately write the letter.

3. **Alphabet recognition-**

A. When shown a letter, uppercase or lowercase, the child can name the letter. When shown the letter in a variety of fonts, the child can still recognize the letter. This helps eliminate confusion and reversals.

B. Sequencing the alphabet. Most children sing their alphabet, and this is good, but the information is stored in another area of the brain, a different area than what we need to be able to access to read. We need to know the order of the alphabet, so we can identify automatically which letter is after, or before a target letter. We are starting with an alphabet strip. You may hear the children say the

phrase, “My left hand is my before hand, my right hand is my after hand”. Then we move to alphabetizing to the first letter, second and third. After that is use of the dictionary.

4. Techniques for reading a new word

Reading involves rules, and students who learn the rules can then decode new words. Research shows that vowels are the most complex part. Therefore, we teach children to look for the vowel, and read the rest. This part is called the rime. Then read the consonant before it, this is the onset. When children make a mistake that they do not self-correct, we ask them to “read rime to onset”. They are familiar with this phrasing, and know what to do. This technique works better than having them skip the word and read on. Do not just ask them to “sound it out”, because they do not always know what we mean by that.

A good website for early readers is www.starfall.com . It has stories and games under each word family.

5. **Fluency** When we first learn, we read word by word. We read faster as the words become automatic. Once the words become automatic, we can add expression when we see the ? and ! marks at the end of the sentence. As they read the sentences, they should aim to read not word by word, but in chunks, until they read fluently. The sentence chunks start with the subject. The next chunk would be what they are doing, and perhaps where they are. Ex. The new parent’s were nervous about washing the baby.

The first chunk would be: The new parent’s

were nervous

about washing the baby.

If we then asked the students, “Who was in the sentence? What were they doing? Why were they doing that? Or Where were they? When did it happen? “ They have chunked the sentences that way so they can easily answer.

You may hear your child talk about fluency with a roller coaster analogy. I tell them when you are being pulled upwards to the first downward drop, the roller coaster jerks you along. This is how you sound when you are reading word by word-jerky. I use my hand to illustrate. When you fly down the hill on the roller coaster, the ride is smooth. That is what fluent reading is, smooth. Again, I use my hands to indicate smooth reading. You can use these hand gestures while listening to your child read.

Also under fluency is accenting the most important words in the sentence as we read. Sometimes we practice by accenting every other letter of the alphabet, or by putting the accent mark on the most important word in the sentence before we read.

6. **High Frequency Words**- These are also called sight words, core words, Dolch words, Fry words. These words follow or do not follow spelling rules, but are important to know by sight because they appear in so many of the stories we read. There are 300 that need to be learned. We are practicing in groups of 5-7. After they are learned we practice spelling them. We spell them by saying the word, then saying the letters as we write the word. Saying the letter names build memory. This technique can be used to jog their memory

about the word too. Many times if they read the letter names, they will remember the word.

7. Spelling unknown words- When they encounter a new word, they are taught to finger spell out the sounds they hear. Ex. plant would be 5 sounds. They write 5 lines to indicate the 5 sounds. Her is a word with 2 sounds, since the -er is a combination. Combination sounds such as: wh, th, sh, ch, er, ir, ur, ar, or, and the vowel teams, have both letters on the same space. Then they fill in the letters that represent the sounds. Although this is time consuming, as they learn more rules, it becomes easier. It also forces them to really think of the word they are spelling instead of writing too many or not enough letters. Spelling is checked by reading the words from rime to onset.

8. Multi-syllable words- these words have prefixes, suffixes, double consonants (like bubble) Many times they freeze when encountering a longer word. The first thing they should do is look to see if the word is a compound word, and read it in 2 pieces. If the word has a suffix or prefix, we put a box around it. This makes the word smaller, and more manageable.

9. Sentence Dictation- Each day a sentence is dictated that includes the sound elements being studied. It is checked for capitals, then ending punctuation, then words are checked by reading rime to onset.

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