Meeting the Letters

In time, I will publish more detailed information on meeting the letters then learning to read. In the meantime, I am providing this information for anyone who needs it NOW.

It took my daughter awhile to firmly memorize the letters and their short vowel and primary consonant sounds. She would often sit on her swing as we practiced. I would show her a letter card (also called sound cards) and say to her for each letter, "What is the name of the letter, what is it's keyword, what does it say?" Your child may learn them quickly or they may seem to take forever. Repetition is the bottom line.

This is an excerpt from the *What if it's Not Dyslexia?* portion of *Teaching a Struggling Reader: One Mom's Experience with Dyslexia*.

Although there can be more to it, the process of teaching reading with phonics is basically:

- Work on segmenting and blending. There are many resources on Pinterest. (These skills have been introduced in the earlier games on Hearing Words, Rhyming, Syllables, and Beginning, Ending, and Middle Sounds.)

- Start by teaching the sounds of a few letters in a multisensory way. Draw them in shaving cream, trace them with your fingers, or any other fun way.

- After your child has learned those letter sounds, sound out a few words with the letters they've been taught so far. Have your child put a finger under each letter and say the sounds as fast as they can until the child can say the whole word.

- Teach a few more letters.

- Sound out more words with those letters.

- Teach sight words, a few at a time. Dolch words are common sight words.

- Have the child read short decodable texts that provide practice with these letters and sounds.

- Move on to more individual phonics rules. Find a systematic decodable reading program. When they have mastered a set of phonics rules, move on to the next set of rules.

- Teach them about the six different syllable types and how they may help determine the vowel sounds in words.

- Make sure to incorporate writing and reading the learned sounds/rules/sight words at each step of the way. Don't just focus on the rules, they need to practice reading and writing.

- My personal recommendation is to teach any learning reader to "tap" while sounding out. (See the earlier section on "tapping.") Some children may try to guess at a word, but if they are tapping it really focuses them on the letters on the page so they will actually read it.

Here is a recommended order of teaching individual letter sounds. It is from *Phonic Reading Lessons* by Nancy Mather Ph.D., et al., 2007.

1. Vowel a: consonants s, m, f, t, n
2. No new vowel: consonants r, d, c, g
3. Vowel o; no new consonants
4. No new vowel; consonants b, h, l x
5. Vowel i; consonants p, k, j
6. Review of a, o, i, and 16 consonants
7. Vowel u; consonants y, z, qu
8. Vowel e; consonants v, w
9. Review of u, e

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