



## Home Activities to Improve Early Reading Skills

### Kindergarten ~

- **First Sound Fluency** – measures student’s ability to isolate the first sound in a word
- **Letter Naming Fluency**–assesses student’s ability to recognize individual letters and say the letter names
- **Phoneme Segmentation** – measures student’s ability to break apart a spoken word into the smallest sound unit, for example the adult says “**cat**”. Child responds “**c....a.....t**”.
- **Nonsense Word Fluency**–assesses a student’s knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and the ability to blend sounds into whole words.



### First Grade ~

- **Phoneme Segmentation**
- **Nonsense Word Fluency**
- **Oral Reading Fluency**



### Second Grade ~

- **Nonsense Word Fluency**
- **Oral Read Fluency**

### First Sound Fluency Activities

To strengthen first sound fluency, hold up a toy mouse or a picture of a mouse. Say: ***This is a mouse.*** Ask: ***What is the name of this animal? (mouse).*** Say: ***Listen carefully while I say the word again.*** Repeat the word, this time stressing the beginning sound. ***Mmmouse.*** Say: ***The first sound in mouse is mmm.... Say the first sound with me mmm....*** Ask: ***What’s the first sound in mouse? Mmm... Good.***

- Choose more toys and have your child name the toy and say the beginning sounds.
- Use picture cards. Have child name the picture and tell you what sound he/she hears in the beginning.
- When you are in the car, at the grocery store, at the park, wherever you go, have child name things and say the beginning sound.
- Say a word. Then have child bounce a ball and say the beginning sound.

- Have your child cut pictures from a magazine; sort according to beginning sounds.
- Say names of everyone you know, have child say the beginning sound in each name.
- Pick words from a book you may be reading to your child. Ask the child to tell you what sound he/she hears at the beginning.

These same activities may be used to help your child identify the ending sound of a word.

### Letter Naming Fluency

- Use magnetic letters, flash cards, cereal boxes, etc. to encourage your child to say the letter names.
- Play the “alphabet game” in the car. Have your child find the letters of the alphabet on signs and billboards.
- Another alphabet game...Have your child turn their back to you. Draw a letter on their back and have him/her guess which letter.
- Read to your child and have them name letters in words.
- Sing the alphabet song clearly. Be sure child knows what letters he/she is singing.
- Write the letters in your child’s name with upper case letters on 3x5 cards. Then write their name with lower case letters on another set of 3x5 cards. Have your child match the letters. Once they are able to recognize the upper/lower case letters in their name, you can extend this to other letters.

### Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

In order for your child to be successful at phoneme segmentation, they also need to be able to recognize words that rhyme. Rhyming words are two or more words that sound the same in the middle and at the end. Reading nursery rhymes, poems, Dr. Seuss books, etc. will help your child recognize words that rhyme.

Phoneme segmentation fluency is when the child has the ability to **hear** and say the separate sounds in words. Begin with easy consonant-vowel-consonant words such as pig, cat, cup, dig, etc. Then progress to words with beginning and ending blends and four sound parts, such as milk, best, track, black, etc.

- When you are in the car, standing in line, waiting for someone, or simply at home, play the word game with your child. You say a word, such as **pig**. Have your child say each sound, **p....i....g**.

- Have your child bounce a ball. You say a word: **Pig**. Ask the child **What word?** Child responds: **Pig**. Child bounces the ball for each sound, **p...**(bounce) **i....**(bounce) **g...**(bounce). Other actions your child may do for each sound are stamp their feet, snap their fingers, clap their hands, or tap a drum.
- Place 3 pieces of paper on the floor foot-stride apart. Say a word. Have your child hop on each paper while saying each sound. Say: **Cup**. Ask the child: **What word?** Child responds: **Cup**. Child hops on first piece of paper and says **k....**. Then child hops on next paper and says **u....**. Last the child hops on the final paper and says **p....**
- Use 2, 3 or 4 M&Ms, Cheerios, pennies, or any round disks. Say a word with 2, 3, or 4 sounds. Have your child push the disk for each sound. Say: **black** (Use 4 disks). Ask the child, **What word?** Child responds: **black**. Child pushes the first disk and says **b....**, then pushes next disk and says **l....**, then pushes next disk and says, **a....**, and pushes last disk and says **k....**
- Put your fist in the air. Put up one finger for each sound. Say the word, **cat**. Ask the child: **What word?** Child responds: **Cat**. *First sound? Kkk....Next sound aaa.... Last sound t....*. Then child pulls fist down and says: **Cat**.
- When you are reading to your child, stop at a word and have him/her say each sound.

### Nonsense Word Fluency

There are two parts to Nonsense Word Fluency. First your child needs to know the letters and the sounds they represent. Then they need to be able to blend the sounds (decode) into simple consonant-vowel-consonant words (CVC) or vowel-consonant (VC) words. This is different from phoneme segmentation where the child hears the words and segments the sound. In Nonsense Word Fluency the child SEES the word and should be able to say each sound; then blend the sounds into a word. The DIBELS assessment uses nonsense words, as some children may already know the real word.

To help a child blend letters sounds into words use simple CVC and VC words. CVC examples are: cat, bat, hat, tag, set, pet, peg, hem, pig, jig, him, sit, hot, job, pot, rob, cup, mug, rut, fun. VC examples are: ax, at, an, it, (not *is*, because the sounds would be *iii....zz*), if, in, on, oz, up. All of the vowels will have a short vowel sound.

- Write the first letter in the word, *cat* and say: **Sound?** Child responds, **c....**
- Then print the next letter and say: **Sound?** Child responds, **a.....**
- Scoop your finger under c and a. Then say **Blend the sounds**. Child responds **c...a....**
- Write the last letter and say: **Sound?** Child responds: **t.....**
- Then scoop your finger under the whole word and say, **Blend the sounds**. Child responds **c...a....t**.

- Last sweep your finger under the whole word and say, **Read the whole word.** Child responds **cat.**

When you are reading to your child, stop at a CVC or VC word and use the same procedure to have him/her decode the word.

## Sight Words

In addition to early reading skills, it is important that your child recognizes and can read grade level sight words. Sight words are tricky words that cannot be sounded out in the regular way. The following are some ideas to practice learning sight words.

Write sight words on 3x5 cards. Make a path on the floor with the words placed foot-stride apart. Your child may step or hop on each card while reading the words.

Use magnetic letters and make the word. Have your child read the word and make it again.

Have your child “write” the word on his/her arm, writing one letter at a time. Right-handers write the word on their left arm. Left-handers write on their right arm.

Play the Memory game. Make two set of sight words. Lay the sight words face down in rows. Take turns with your child trying to find a pair of matching words. Make sure your child reads the word each time he/she flips it over. If they cannot read the word, they have to put the word back face down.

Your child may “air write” the words, using a magic pencil (finger). Make sure lefties use their left hand. The child says each letter as they “write” the word. Be sure to remind them to picture the word in their mind. It is good to have them first write in LARGE, then medium, then tiny. Always have your child underline the word and say it.

\*As your child becomes more capable of recognizing sight words, he/she may have fun being timed. See how many words they can read in a minute which will build their fluency.

***Most importantly...read to your child and read with your child! READ....READ....READ!***

