

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS TO ACTIVITY 1

All the activities in Activity 1 are related to learning to recognize words by matching them to another identical word.

All the words need to be clearly different in shape.

All the words need to be well known and include the few words you introduced initially.

If you are working with a child who already has been introduced to reading at school, you can do these activities with a very simple book you already have, or make a simple one with a few more words. If a word gives trouble at this stage, discard it. There needs to be lots of success at this stage.

Collect the material for this week and store it in an old envelope or folder with Activity 1 on it!

- Make a simple book like Jemma or Sam's "This is" book, or photo copy either of these and staple them together! They will be fine, though not quite as good as one written about your own child - but you can't be a perfectionist always!
- A good supply of small rectangular cards. They can be larger - like 20 x 8 cm (~1/3rd of an A4 sheet) if you have lots of card available, but smaller ones, 2 x 8 cm, are fine. Once you decide on a size, make all the cards the same size or your child will remember that "is" is the short card and "aeroplane" is the long card, without even looking at the shape of the word.
- black texta
- Record sheets
- Reward stickers. You can buy some lovely shiny gold stars. Or as Jemma suggested to me - use the stickers from the apples!

The first week's work is mainly to set a pattern of interaction and interest. There is more than you can do in 15 or 20 minutes together with revision. Revision is always valuable, but don't try to introduce something new after 35 minutes of revision and expect it to be greeted with full enthusiasm.

The work with simple readers is establishing a method for teaching new words at any early level, and can be adapted for any child. I have only included it here once, but it can be used often.

If you are doing this with a child who is already at school, playing school is most fun, and you should take the lead from your child about what you do at school - sit with your legs crossed, fold your hands, put your hands up etc - as they do it at your child's school.

Day 3 introduces a game that is one of the simplest games that can be used for revising words. In this case, it is used for practicing word recognition, and for looking at each word several times until it is well known.

The same game can be used with innumerable minor alterations to revise single letters, numbers, sums or spelling

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 1 READING A SIMPLE READER

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE:

- Word cards: names of the four members of your family you used in the first session.
e.g. **This is** (both words on the one card) **Sam Jack** (or your child's and his sibling's names) **mummy daddy and** (this word I too hard to use begin with.)

- A simple pre reader using your computer and digital camera.

Make your own simple reader or pre reader with very few words, very few pages, and large writing and pictures illustrating the text using four known words and only three others. See sample "Sam's book"

"This is Sam."

"This is Jack."

This is Sam and Jack."

"This is mummy and Jack."

"This is Sam and daddy."

"This is Sam and Jack and mummy and daddy ."

New words: **This is mummy daddy**

Note : **"This is"** should be treated as just one word initially.

You can use "Sam's book" but preferably make your own. Then you can use "Sam's book" in addition on day two or three with most of the same words, only needing to teach new words **"Sam"** and **"Jack"**

- Make paper strips with the sentences from the book on them.
- Make cards with the important words in the book on them.
- Prepare a page with all the words in the book on it.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Establish your playing school procedure. For these sessions with a beginner reader, the pupil sitting on the floor and the teacher sitting on a low chair is a good set up.. You must take turns being teacher.

1. Revise the first words you have taught
Use names of the members of your family.
2. Play "Hide the word" or "Which hand will you have?" to practice those words.
3. Read the new book as a story.
Maybe read it a couple of times to make sure you establish the words as they are written. It is important to point to the words as you read. Let him read the words that he knows - get excited about that!
4. Take turns reading each page.
5. Ask your child to read the whole book to you (He is teacher). Ask him to point to the words as he reads.
Pointing to the words can be difficult - it is like counting and it is very hard for a child to slow down enough to point to each object when he counts (he has only touched six objects but he has already got to ten), and so it is with words.
6. Look at a sentence card. e.g. **"This is Sam"**
Can you find the page which is the same?
Match the card to all pages until you find the right one. Then read both sentences.
Repeat with other cards.
7. Look at individual words in the sentences
Start with the easy ones.
Can you find the word that says "Sam", "Jack" (or preferably your own child's name if you have made a new book.)
8. Find individual words
Try finding an individual word, using a word card. Look on every page until you find it. Repeat with another word. If this has gone well try to find "and" - a hard one - look for all the "and" words and read the sentences to find them. (You can save up "This is" until next time unless he is very keen and sure of the others.)
9. Read all the words on the back page
If this has gone well try reading all the words on the back page.
Don't tell your child the word, get him to look back at the story to find what it is - establishing this method.
10. Do the record sheet
Put a star on the record sheet for good work (even if the work was disappointing.)
11. The work in this session can be repeated casually when your child reads the book to his brother, father (pointing to the words) or anyone else he can find.
12. Repeat this session to establish these words, then you can use this method whenever you want to introduce to introduce new words.

METHOD:

1. Establish, the meaning of the word with a picture.
2. Isolate the word on a card and match it with the word below the picture.
3. Look at the word without the picture (i.e. in a game). Your child can match it with the word under the picture if he cannot remember it. Reward (praise, feelings of achievement) when correct.
4. Extra reward if correct without matching it.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 2 MAKING A SIMPLE READER TOGETHER

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Four or five sheets of A4 paper and a stapler
- A texta pen (or do this on your computer - print it out and paste it on)
- A magazine where you will find pictures of things familiar to your child - e.g a baby, an animal, a house or (expendable) photos of family, pets, toys etc- even better.
- Cards or paper to write the words and sentences.
- Clag or sticky tape to stick the picture on to your page

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Establish your playing school procedure again.

1. Read the first book again
Play "Which hand will you have?" with the cards.
2. Start to make your own (2nd) book. I suggest that this be a "This is" book
Write "**This is**" large on the front page.
Find a picture,
Cut or **tear it out and stick it on your page 1.**
Write "This is a baby." or whatever underneath the picture.
You must agree on the label - If he says "**This is a kitty.**", don't write "**This is a cat.**"
Both of you read the writing pointing to the words.
3. Make about four or five pages similarly. (that is, 4 or 5 new noun words)
4. Ask your child to read the whole book to you - he is teacher.
Look at individual words particularly "**This is**" in the sentences starting with the easy ones. Can you find the word that says "**baby**".
Can you find the words that say "**This is**" ?
5. Make a list of all the words in the book.
See which ones you can find (or if he prefers it , write or print out the sentences to match with the ones in the book.)
Make cards for the ones he is interested in.
6. Match them with word and sentence cards if sufficient interest and time as for day 1.
7. Don't forget the record sheet and star
Give more than one for really good work, rather than none for non-cooperation.
8. Repeat this session to establish these words, then you can use this method whenever you want to introduce to introduce new words.

METHOD:

1. Establish, the meaning of the word with a picture.
2. Isolate the word on a card and match it with the word below the picture.
3. Look at the word without the picture (i.e. in a game). Your child can match it with the word under the picture if he cannot remember it.
4. Reward (praise, feelings of achievement) when correct.
5. Extra reward if correct without matching it.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 3 PRACTICING RECOGNIZING WORDS – STEPPING STONES GAME

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Your first simple reader. Make sure it is well known. This will form the reference point for words that are not remembered.
- Cards with all the words from the first book and maybe some very interesting ones from the second “This is” book.
- Chalk if you will play “Stepping Stones” game outside.
- Stars.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

This will show you if your child has in fact retained the words you have been isolating. If he has not remembered them, he needs to go back to the book and read along to find out what they say while he is playing the game.

Establish your playing school procedure.

1. Read the first book or books,

Repeat some of the day 1 activities.

2. Play new game “Stepping Stones” game.

Place four or five word cards you have chosen on the stones. Start with the easy ones. Change the order around occasionally.

Don't include “This is” or “and” initially until you are sure that the other words are known. But once the other words are well known you can concentrate on these more difficult words.

Tell him part of your room has turned into a river and to get across he has to be able to say the words on the cards correctly. If he misses one he will fall splash! into the river.

Or you can draw stepping stones on the pavement outside and put a card in each.

Let him have several turns, checking in the book if he can't remember what the word says, (remove any that are too hard).

Then you have a turn and get him to check very carefully that you are right - it is a good idea to miss one and fall splash in the water but make sure it is one he knows.

3. Re read his book

If he knows each word and can read the book pointing to the words, try covering up the pictures and get him to read it. **HE IS NOW READING!**

Give him lots of appreciative feedback!

3. Don't forget the star on the record sheet.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 4 ANOTHER NEW SIMPLE READER

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Word cards: all the words introduced in the first simple readers .
- New: Make another simple reader with very few words, use "Sam's book" if you have not already done so
- New words in "Sam's book" are only "Sam" and "Jack" .
- Strips with the sentences in the book on them.
- Cards with the new words in the book on them.
- A page with all the words in the book on it.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Establish your playing school procedure.

1. Revise all the first words you have taught

Play "Stepping Stones" or another favorite game.

2. Read the new book as a story,

He will be able to read almost all of it - only needing to be told the new names. Continue to point to the words.

3. Take turns reading each page.

4. Then ask your child to read the whole book to you.

5. Read the book looking for the new words on the cards.

6. You could try making his own sentences with the word cards.

e.g. **"This is Sam and mummy and daddy and Jemma."**

Use any other words he may have learned. Write a new word for him if he needs it.

You may not have enough words yet to make it interesting.

6 Do the record sheet

Put a star on the record sheet for good work (or even if the work was disappointing.)

Again encourage him to read this new reader to any one he meets.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 5 REVISING WORDS NEW GAME “CLAP WHEN YOU SEE”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Select some words to revise and have the cards for these words from one or both of your simple readers e.g. new words “Sam” and “Jack”. The readers can again form a reference point for words that are not well remembered.

Or you can make a list of the words you are concentrating on and draw a picture beside each one to use as a reference point. Or use cards with a picture and word under it as reference points.

Jemma had a list of the words she knew on the bathroom door with a sketch to help with some. That is her preferred reference point. New words can be added as learned.

- For the game use the words you have been already teaching unless these are very well known then you can use new ones.

This session can easily be stopped half way through and done on different days.

- Pages with same words written in dots to trace. Textas.
- Stars.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Establish your playing school procedure.

1. Read the one or more of your simple books pointing to each word, including the list of words on the last page.
2. Play new game with known words “Clap when you see --”

Select about half a dozen words that are known. Have a reference book available for checking or better still some pictures with the word under it.

Hold all the cards in a pile and show him one at a time. Say “Clap when you see **“mummy”!**” Then change the top card slowly until you get to **“mummy”**. If he does not recognize it get him to check one of his references and clap. Once he gets the idea and is recognizing most of the words pretend to go very fast and so he will not see the one you have chosen.

3. Play other favorite games.
4. Don't forget the star on the record sheet.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 6 DOING A BIT OF WRITING

A WORD ABOUT WRITING.

Writing and copying words is a very good way to impress their shape on your memory and is useful with four or five year old children. However with younger children their physical development and fine motor coordination may not sufficiently developed to make this a particularly useful activity.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Black/White boards - ideally two little boards (30 mm X 40 mm) plus chalk and dusters. Or use paper and crayons if you do not have access to a blackboard.

You can make one or two blackboards quite easily with a sheet of three ply or maisonite and a tin of blackboard paint. They don't last for ever but are OK for a while. You can get sheets of proper "Timsonplate" black (green) board from Bunnings cut to size.

- Cards with picture and word under it. Same words as you have been already teaching unless these are very well known then you can use new ones.
- Cards with several words from one or both books.
- Pages with some words written in dots to trace.
- Textas.
- Stars.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Re-establish your playing school procedure.

For writing the "teacher" sits on a little chair and the "child" sits on the floor !

1. Play yesterday's new game again

"Clap when you see --" a good quick revision of any words that are becoming well known.

Select about half a dozen words that are known. Still have a reference available for checking when he forgets.

3. Do a bit of writing on the blackboard

You do a writing pattern of a line of shapes and get him to repeat it underneath.

e.g. a line of vertical strokes, a line of circles, or a line of zigzags., a line of m's joined together.

4. Write one of the words large in dots and let him trace over it.

5. See if he can copy that word. Repeat if this is reasonably easy. Do not criticize attempts that may seem very inadequate - the coordination required to do this needs lots of practice and a level of physical development.

6. Don't forget the star on the record sheet.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 7 NEW READER , NEW GAME MAKING OWN SENTENCES

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Word cards: all the words introduced so far .
- New: Third simple reader "**Sam's family**"

New words in "Sam's family" are only "**has**", "**called**", "**friend**" and "**Esteban**".

The only word it important to teach here is "**has**", but "**called**" is also valuable as it is a good word to use in other books. You can make a book about all of his friends.

If you can easily make your own reader do so and use "**Sam's 'has' book**" as a supplement later.

- Strips with the sentences in the book on them and/or cards with the new words in the book on them.
- Spare cards to write a new word if required.

WHAT YOU DO:

Establish your playing school procedure.

1. Revise all the first words you have taught

Play a favorite game.

2. Introduce the new book as a story,

Tell him that there is a new word in it and it is "has", but he will know most of the other words.

It is not an easy word, so you will need to tell him a few times as he reads the book.

Continue to point to the words.

3. Take turns reading each page.

Then ask your child to read the whole book to you.

4. Read the book looking for the new word "**has**".

5...Try making his own sentences with the word cards.

Lay them out on the floor or table.

e.g. "**This is 'own name'**"

"**'Own name'** has a mummy and a daddy"

"**'Own name'** has a friend called ----"

Use any other words he may have learned. Write a new word for him if he needs it.

You may not have enough words yet to make it interesting.

Jemma needed new words to make her sentence "Jemma has a special bear called Hanni." and they will be words that she uses and remembers

5. Do record sheet

Again. encourage him to read this new reader to any one he meets.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 8 FISHING GAME

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Simple readers
- Word cards
- Equipment for fishing game

To make fish you will need

(1) Coloured cards cut out in fish shapes (all the same or different if you are imaginative!)

(2) A paper clip on each fish with a card attached (you can write the words on the fish but you will want to use the fish with other words- or you can dispense with the colored fish shapes and just pretend the cards are “fish”).

(3) Fishing rod and line -a short stick with a piece of string about 600mm long tied to one end. A small cheap magnet (probably a horse shoe magnet) tied on the end of the string.

The magnet is the hook, and should pick up the fish by the paper clip when it is dangled above it.

You could use a piece of blue wool to define a lake in which the fish are swimming.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Read sentences in most recent reader

2. Choose a number of words to revise (depending on the stage you are at).

Choose some of the more interesting words that have been used in the sentences to practice their recognition in a different context. Write them on cards or just use the cards you have been practicing.

(If your child finds this hard, choose the easy ones - these are usually interesting nouns or words he has met before.. If he finds this very easy choose the tricky ones.)

Go through them once quickly to be sure.

3. Play the fishing game

Spread the fish with a words clipped on to each in the lake or pond outlined by the wool or just use your imagination for the lake.

Let your child try to catch a fish by dangling the magnet above the paper clip on a fish. He must throw the fish back again if he cannot say the word on it.

Lizzie used multiple fishing rods and fish as a game suitable for the three year old guests at Sam's third birthday party.

There are lots of other uses - revision of any words, letters, numbers, sums.

4. Play some of your other favorite games.

ACTIVITY 1 DAY 9 and onward MORE NEW READERS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Word cards: all the words introduced so far .
- New: Further simple readers such as **“Sam’s has book”**, **“Sam’s toys”**

These are books about things that are of utmost importance to your child.

Use the model book to make your own even if they are only in your own printing with a sketch drawn by you or your child.

- Make cards with the new words in the book on them as you go.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Keep revising all the words you have taught by playing favorite games.
2. Introduce the new book as a story or use a new book in which all words are known.

Continue to point to the words.

3. Take turns reading each page
4. Read the book looking for the new words.
4. Try making his own sentences with the word cards.

Lay them out on the floor or table.

Write a new word for him if he needs it for his sentence.

5. Isolate and practice interesting and useful words using favorite games

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 2 FIRST STAGE OF PHONICS –RECOGNIZING INITIAL SOUNDS

This series of activities is the introduction to phonics- the method of reading that enables a child to work out words by himself using the individual letters of the word to identify the word.

The basis of this skill is recognizing the sounds that a word is composed of, and also recognizing the sounds that individual letters most frequently make.

An alphabet book is a useful aid in developing these skills.

A NOTE ON ALPHABET BOOKS

An alphabet book is designed so that the first sound in the name of the object in the picture gives a clue to the sound that the letter makes.

The letters are best learned as the sounds made by the letters, rather than the names of the letters. This means that a child firstly learns to call the letter “**c**” by the sound “**ck**” rather than “**see**”. **These sounds than can soon be put together to make words, and the child can hear “m-o-p” makes “mop”** (after some practice) where he would not be able to make head or tail of “em- oh-pee”. You can teach the names of the letters later, but it can be confusing at the earliest stage.

The sounds that we teach first are those that a letter most commonly makes in a word. For example we teach a child that “**c**” says “**ck**” at first, even though we later may teach him that it also can say “**ss**” as in “**mice**”.

All consonants have an easily recognizable normal sound, but vowel “a” may be used equally often in their short or long form “**a**” as in “**cat**”, or “**a**” as in “**cake**” or “**sail**”.

The short form is generally taught first because it is generally less complicated than the long form, which is often combined with another vowel before it makes the sound. .e.g “**ai**” as in “**sail**”.

You will find that even quite good alphabet books do not stick to this method, and have pictures of “**ivy**” for the letter “**i**”, rather than “**ink**”.

It is always much easier for a child to hear a sound of a consonant when it is joined directly to a vowel rather than another consonant. For instance the sound “**s**” is much easier to hear in “**sun**” than “**snake**” which is confusing as the initial sound is “**sn**” rather than “**sss**”.

Try to keep these points in mind when you are working with your child in these sessions.

It is quite difficult, so try out the test for parents on the next page and if you get anything wrong, read this page again.

TEST FOR PARENTS

Which of the following would be good words for teaching their initial sounds?

Put a tick beside the good ones and a cross beside those that would not be as suitable, then turn the page upside down for the answers.

1. b butterfly
2. c church
3. r rabbit
4. s star
5. o owl
6. o octopus
7. a animal
8. u Union Jack
9. v verandah
10. c crocodile
11. t thong
12. a apricot

ANSWERS

1. butterfly good word
2. church not good, starts with "ch" not "c"
3. rabbit good word
4. star not good starts with "st" not just "s"
5. owl not good, starts with "ow" not short "o"
6. octopus good word
7. animal good word
8. Union Jack not good, long "u" rather than "u" as in umbrella
9. veranda good word
10. crocodile not good "cr" not "c"
11. thong not good, initial sound is "th" not "t"
12. apricot not good long "a" used

ACTIVITY 2 INTRODUCING ALPHABET BOOK

ACTIVITY 2 DAY 2 INITIAL SOUNDS OF LITTLE THINGS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- MATCHBOX OF LITTLE THINGS

Start collecting these from around the house for a few days before this session. They should be small enough to fit into a matchbox (that is quite small), fit the rules about suitable initial sounds, and interesting to your child.

Some suggestions: match, candle, safety pin, nail, leaf, money (or five cents) band aid, photo (cut small - initial sound "f"), seed, nut, paper clip, ring (a cheap pretty one is fun) button, key, lid, hair clip, toothpick, rubber ring, lolly. You don't need this many,

WHAT YOU CAN DO (this contains several days of activity)

1. Show matchbox of "little things" and name them.

Go through and name everything together. It doesn't matter what you call something so long as you have agreed on a name for it e.g. bean or seed, money or five cents.

2. Listen for initial sounds

Put every thing on the floor or table and ask your child to pick any one up and tell you what sound it's name starts with. e.g. "candle starts with c".

Then take turns to do it.

(Use only a few to start with if he finds this hard, and go over and over the same ones, and choose easy ones "s", "m", "f", "r" which can make a continuous sound.).

3. Play "I spy with my little eye something that starts with "s" etc.

Using little things.

This is harder than just saying what sound you can hear in a word. If it is very hard, have only four or five little things on the floor till he gets the idea of listening to the word carefully.

4. Play "I spy with my little eye something that starts with."

Use pictures in a picture book so you focus on just a few things. Go through all the objects on a page saying "bus starts with "b" " etc Then play "I spy" with the objects on the same page.

Continue with this work until it the concept grasped and your child can hear the sound before you go on to initial letters.

In Prep grades at my school, the teachers would mostly introduce one sound a day and draw pictures of things with the sound, or find pictures in magazines and stick them on the page. If your child finds this difficult try this.

4. Stars and record sheet.

ACTIVITY 2 DAY 3 MAKING AN ‘INITIAL SOUNDS’ BOOK

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Box of “little things“
- Blank plain paper book. (staple one together.)
- Magazines for pictures to cut out

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

This is something that you can do over several days or longer. You are emphasizing the sounds, not the letters at this stage. Many pre schools do a sound a week, but once your child gets the idea you do not need to do a page for every sound before you start to teach letters.

1. Play “I spy” with little things
2. Introduce the new blank book. Write a letter large on the first page. I suggest “s” or “m” or “f” the easiest sounds to hear. (You are concentrating on the sound, but this is an introduction to the letter too.)

Tell your child what it says then practice saying it.

Look for pictures of things starting with that sound to stick on the page. Check by saying the word slowly and listening - does it really start with “s”?

Get your child to find appropriate pictures, but veto any that are not correct.

(if you don’t have magazines, you can ask him to think of a word of something that starts with “s” (like I spy) and then look for images of it on the internet, and print a good picture out, or draw it.

3. Draw some other things that starts with your sound

On his blackboard, or a piece of paper rather than in his book, which can become a reference book, unless your child is really good at fitting his pictures into a small space.

4. Start a new page with a new sound/letter if your child is very confident

Continue this on subsequent days until you have several pages. Add to each page when you find something new that fits. You may continue until you have completed the alphabet

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 3 LETTERS FOR SOUNDS

This activity is actually learning to recognize the letters of the alphabet and identifying them by the sound that they make.

Because it is the lower case letters that generally are used in written words, it is confusing to introduce capital letters until considerably later. (In fact I cannot remember ever actually introducing capital letters to children, they were picked up incidentally from capital letters at the beginning of names and sentences.)

And it is much more helpful and less confusing to introduce the sound rather than the name of the letter initially—“**ck**” for “**c**” rather than the name pronounced “**see**”.

How fast can you go

You will need to spend more time on hearing initial sounds if your child has difficulty with this . (Don't panic – if you have only been doing it for a week - at school they may take a week for each sound before they start letter recognition.)

Recognition of letters

But if you need to hurry - for instance if you are trying to help your child to catch up with his peers, continue to work with the letters as well as the sounds. But if you are working with a preschooler, take it easy with the letters until the sounds can be easily recognized.

As with words, the processes involved in recognizing letters includes two separate processes - firstly the recognition of the shape of the letter e.g. “**f**” and secondly remembering the sound made by that letter. Your child may see “**f**” and say “That is the fish one”. He recognizes the letter but cannot remember it's sound.

It is also essential that before you ask a child to put letters together to make phonetic or sounding words he knows each letter very very well indeed.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Alphabet book

You will need a good alphabet book. Choose one and stick to it as it becomes confusing if you are using more than one as a reference book. (see note on alphabet books.)

- Lettercards.

You will need a set of 26 letter cards - they can be quite small with all the lowercase letters printed in your best writing or print them out on the computer.

I suggest for “**q**” you write “**qu**”- thus obviating confusion with “**p**” and “**q**”, and also because it is always written thus.

Warning - “**b**” and “**d**”

Do not push your child to learn these letters too fast, and be particularly careful of “**b**” and “**d**”, “**n**” and “**u**”. If your child becomes confused and panicky about recognizing such difficult to differentiate letters this can set up a mental blockage that makes it even harder to learn.

I have a mental block of my own associated with the word "receive". Because I have become so confused about the various rules about "i" and "e" and the exceptions to the rule, I can never spell "receive" without checking it in a dictionary (Thank God for spell checks!) I know that "i" is before "e" except after "c", but there are some exceptions to this rule. I can never remember if "receive" is an exception or not. I am always so sure I will get it wrong that I cannot approach the word calmly and logically. If you are not careful you can set up a similar state of mind in your child about "b" and "d".

If he has trouble with "b" and "d" just get him to calmly check in his book each time, and he will gradually learn them as he meets them in context. (You can use "bed" as a reference point".

- bright attractive LOWER CASE plastic letters.

This is just a new attractive interesting toy to make continued practice a little bit more exciting.

There is a good set of fridge magnets readily available. The ones I used to use are no longer produced. NOTE: There are plenty of uppercase letters (THEY ARE WORSE THAN USELESS AT THIS STAGE- THEY ARE CONFUSING), but I found lower case letters very hard to find.

You can substitute with just another set of cards (on a different colour card, written in coloured pens), or if you are really energetic, cutting out each lowercase letter in outline from a shiny piece of coloured cardboard.

Writing

This week we again try some writing.

Writing, controlling a writing instrument so that it will make the marks you want it to, is a very difficult skill for most small children. To be able to write words neatly you need to be taught the letter formations one at a time, so remember that this is just a play around, exploratory session.

We are not concentrating on teaching how to write in this program, but one of the things that help develop control of writing instruments is doing writing patterns - rows of circles, rows of straight lines approximately the same size, rows of linked mmm and nnn or uuu's. Jemma improved her writing of mm's greatly after practice of rows of joined mms.

Writing is difficult for a four or five year old, particularly as they are just starting. One of the greatest causes of frustration to a five year old (and cause of temper tantrums) can be his inability to do things his older brother or his mother or father can do. You must be very positive about all his efforts at writing. Be very generous in your praise of him for trying hard and for improving. Be careful if you are disappointed in his efforts that you do not show it. You will be surprised, maybe amazed, at how quickly his writing will improve with practice and praise.

ACTIVITY 3 DAY 3 INTRODUCE PLASTIC LETTERS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Lower case plastic letters, fridge magnet letters, or just your letter cards if the others are too hard to find. (They are only for a bit of extra fun and motivation- but they are excellent motivation and fun to use)
- Alphabet book

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Introduce packet of letters (or whatever new letters you have made)

Let him tip the letters out and go through telling you the ones he knows.

Explain why any letters are different from the ones you have been using.

2. Compare plastic letters with alphabet book letters

- Spread all the letters on the floor, turn up the right way.
- Open the alphabet book at the first page. Ask “What sound does this letter make?”
- Then ask “Can you find “a” on the floor?” and get him to compare it with the book to check he is right.

(If he doesn’t remember the sound, get him to try to work it out by finding what apple starts with. If he still has trouble tell him the sound.)

d). Continue through the book finding all the letters.

If you have multiples of any of the letters, go through them finding the page to match each letter and saying it’s sound.

3. Sort plastic letters into known and unknown

- Get him to go through all the letters putting them into two piles, those he can say, and those he cannot, or says incorrectly.
- Put the letter into his pile if he knows it, and your pile if he doesn’t.
- Then get him to go through all those he doesn’t know (or some of them) and look them up in his alphabet book. If you have time after this you could again check how many he now can put into his own pile.

NB If you let him play with the letters and the alphabet book by himself, he could continue to teach himself with the letters if his interest has been aroused (to get all the letters into his own pile)

4. Make words with the letters

You make a word he knows well, e.g. his own name. Get him to read it, then break it up and try to make it again. You can use other really well known words from his reading. Use a word card to copy when re-making the word.

5. Revise “I Spy” game

6. Record Sheet and star

These are activities that can be enjoyed together or by a child individually if he is interested until all the letters are known.

ACTIVITY 3 DAY 6 NEW GAME “TICK TACK TOE”

EQUIPMENT

- Letter cards or plastic letters
- Alphabet book
- Pointer

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Go through letter cards or plastic letters

Choose tricky ones to use in the game. Trace over them with finger.

2. Game "Tick Tack Toe"

Scatter several letter cards (or plastic letters) face down on the floor.

Use a stick or a ruler or piece of rolled up newspaper as a pointer.

Take it in turns to walk around touching each card in turn as you say

"Tick Tack toe,

Here I go

Where I land I do not know"

Pickup the card you are touching when you stop and say the letter.

Show him how to play it, then let him do it until all the cards or letters are chosen correctly. He can check in his alphabet book if he is unsure. He keeps the correct ones. If he says a card incorrectly put it down face down again.

(This is a great game to revise just about anything.)

Don't forget to read your readers as well as doing this work.

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 4 BLENDING LETTER SOUNDS TO MAKE WORDS

Blending

In day 1 of this week it is suggested that you commence the introduction of phonetic words and blending letters to identify words. Some simple words are suggested such as “**sun**”, “**man**” “**fat**”. This is the first stage of blending for children who know all their sounds.

To read “**sun**” from “**s**” “**u**” “**n**” your child has to

1. Identify each individual letter by its sound.
2. Hear the three sounds blend into a word.

That is keep saying each sound slowly until he starts to say the next sound .

“**sss**” ..”**uuu**” ...”**nnn**”.

3. Identify the sounds he has joined together as a word he knows.

Your child can really blend when he can sound out a word he has never heard before such as a name (**Zip, Pud**) and say it.

I think that this is the most difficult part of the whole program, if your child does not know all the letters very well defer it and do some of the next activities first, coming back to it every now and then.

If he is ready, start now, but don't let it get too frustrating or spend long too long on it.

DON'T EXPECT IMMEDIATE SUCCESS even if your child is very bright.

Most of you will find that you can say “**c**”, “**a**”, “**t**” ten times for your child and ask him what is the word, and he will brightly say “**dog**” or “**pig**” and you will feel like strangling him! But he doesn't understand what you are on about., and he cannot hear what you are saying. When you ask him to sound it for himself he will say “I'm sick of this game!”

If you only use words that he recognizes he will know the answer immediately, but he won't get the idea - so if you are working with an older child who has missed out on this skill you may have to use some obscure words to be sure he gets the method - because The **method** is what you are trying to teach. This is so he will be able to work out other words for himself and gradually become independent of you telling him words. It is often helpful to give him a clue - such as two or three pictures to choose from.

But be careful - if you work with three pictures - sun, man and rat - your child will quickly work out that if the word starts with “**m**” it must be “**man**”, and will not listen to the other sounds.

All I can say is- don't get too discouraged. Take it steady and don't let it disturb your relationship with your child and his enjoyment of the program in general. I know that time and time again I have sat and listened to the twelve mothers in the group explaining how difficult this work was with their child. But before the end of the program, I think every child grasped it.

The word game in this week's work is just one of the simple little games that help to make revising words or letters interesting.

*When I was first teaching we were supposed firstly to teach blends of just two letters - “**ca**” “**co**” “**cu**” called stems!. Then the child was supposed to easily add the third sound.*

But it was all so meaningless I think it is better to try the three letter straight away. - except for "if" and ' etc as encountered in reading .

Word and picture cards

You can find cards that consist of three letter phonetic words with an illustration to correspond with each word.

THE AIM IS NOT TO TEACH THE CHILD TO RECOGNIZE THE WORD, BUT TO PRACTICE WORKING OUT WORDS FOR HIMSELF. Therefore they should be cut up into individual word and picture card sets immediately.

The fact that you have a picture can help a child to guess a little to begin with, using only 2 or 3 cards, can help him get the idea. Remember also that nothing motivates as much as success. So try to engineer some success.

Later he can search through the whole set to make up his pairs or even play "memory" with a friend using them.

MEMORY or FISH is a very old card game played by two or more in which the players have a set of cards (say 5) and all the other cards are face down on the table/ floor.

You take it in turns to turn over a card and try to find one to match one of those in your hand. You continue your turn while you are successful, but your opponent takes the turn when you miss .

Reading a simple phonic reader

This is a stepping-stone to attacking any reading matter, by reading a book where every word can be sounded out. Success is ensured if all the words are phonetically regular. It gives lots of practice with the new skill in a fun format. Try making your own reader - it is a bit too hard for your child to suggest the right words. Then you can move to readers where some of the words are irregular, but most are phonetic. (some of the Dr.Seuss books).

Look for commercially available phonic readers - for some inexplicable reason there are not very many to be easily found.. Some are advertised on the internet.

Writing three letter words

If you ask a child to copy the order of the letters in a known word - such as "hop" or "mat" this is just a recognition exercise. He just looks for letters similar to those in his copy. But if you ask him to make "mat" out of his letters without a copy to refer too, that is a MUCH harder skill - and it should not be expected of your child at this stage.

The first stage is learning to read "mat". It is more difficult to hear the word "mat" in your head and try to work out what letters it is made from than to look at the three letters and try and find out what sounds they make, and from that identify the word.

ACTIVITY 4 DAY 1 MATCHING THREE LETTER WORDS WITH PICTURES

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- New three letter word cards and matching pictures..

write and draw your own.

- Alphabet book
- Letter cards
- Plastic letters

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Revise single letters

- a) Revise the alphabet book.
- b) Sort the plastic letters or letter cards into known and unknown.

.If your child has trouble with more than three or four of these spend most time on this section.

Play “**Fishing game**” with difficult letters with alphabet book available for reference.

Don't worry too much about “b” and “d” - leave them out completely -if they cause trouble don't introduce three letter words using them yet - and every time you do have trouble, get your child to check in the alphabet book.

2. New game Matching three letter words with picture card

Start with a set of about four words and the pictures to go with them.

Go through all the picture cards first, finding the correct name for each picture e.g. “**mat**” not “**carpet**” - If disputed - “**That is the word we will be using for this game**”.

1. Spread out picture cards on the floor.
2. Show him one word card at a time.
3. Ask him to tell you all the sounds one at a time in order once or twice, saying them very slowly. Tell him the sound if he cannot remember.
4. Ask him to try and work out what the word says saying the sound over and over, and see if he can find the right picture.

Suggest he look at the pictures - they might give him a clue.

If he chooses the wrong picture, ask him to say the sounds again to check if he is right.

5. You may need to try and help him blend the sounds together, don't let him get too frustrated, but also be sure that he has a good try himself.

Even if he can blend only the first two letters he may gradually get the idea.

6. When he gets a pair correct, much praise - and he puts it in his pile until he has matched all of them.

If it was successful play again with a larger number of pictures and words . If it was very hard give it away for the day and start afresh again soon.

3 Repeat game - mixing up both words and pictures.

If he found the game quite difficult, repeat it in the same form or make it simpler. But if it was fairly easy, he might like to mix up both words and pictures on the floor, then try to sort them into pairs by himself. Add extra words (make your own) as it gets too easy.

4. Go through the pile of words on their own without the help of the pictures

This is when he is really good at working out all the words. Make some more three letter word cards and picture cards and extend the game.

Continue to repeat variations of day 1 and day 2 and play "**Tick tack toe**", "**fishing**"

Stepping stones" with the three letter word cards. He will get to recognize them soon as well as being able to sound them out, so keep adding one or two new ones that have to be sounded.

ACTIVITY 4 DAY 2 READ AND ILLUSTRATE THREE LETTER WORDS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Letter cards or plastic letters
- Three letter word cards and matching pictures
- Blackboard and chalk
- Paper and coloring pens

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Revise sounds of single letters

Use letter cards or plastic letters.

If any are still causing trouble hide them under cups and play “**Tick tack toe**”.

2. **Play matching words and pictures**

As for yesterday, but include a couple of new ones if he is coping.

3. **Copy words on blackboards and illustrate**

Write a three letter word on a blackboard and he draws a picture of it

Use the same words that are on the cards at first , then make up new ones.

Try to think of funny ones or even unusual words “**zip**” “**pip**” “**pup**” when he gets good at this.

4. **Copy and illustrate words on paper**

Write several words on paper for him to work out and illustrate if he is getting good at this..But check what he is drawing. (You may not be able to identify it, but it may be correct!)

5. **Copy words from cards with plastic letters and find the picture to match.**

6. Much **praise and stars** if this has gone well. It can be done over a number of days. It is hard work!

ACTIVITY 4 DAY 3 “SKITTLES GAME”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Ball (light plastic for indoor use) and skittles

Skittles made from plastic cream bottles with a slit cut in the top of the bottle to slide a card in, (or a cheap set of plastic skittles and blue tack to attach the cards.)

Three letter word cards and matching pictures..

Any reading cards for revision

Fishing game equipment

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Revise letters

Choose some that need revising and play games with them.

Particularly “b” and “d” with alphabet book for reference.

2. New game “Skittles”

Choose some three letter words to revise.

Put the skittles in a row or double row.

Your child rolls the ball at them from a distance than ensures that he hits at least one or two. (May need to be quite close!)

He sounds out the word as he puts the skittle upright again. If he can say the word correctly he may replace it with another card.

3. Play some other favorite games

“Tick tack toe” , “Stepping stones” , “Clap when you see” , “Hide the card”, “Fishing” with three letter words.

3. Illustrate some of the words

ACTIVITY 4 DAY 4 NEW “TINY BELL GAME”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Tiny bell (hard to find - except for a “cat bell” in a pet shop. Just a gimmick for a new game)

Or you could use tapping sticks, a drum, a tape or the radio.

- Any word cards you would like to revise.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Select words to revise.

Sounding words (or anything you wish to revise.)

2. New game “ Stop with the Bell”

Put all the cards in a circle on the floor, face downwards.

While you ring the tiny bell he must march, skip or run around the circle.

As soon as the bell stops he must immediately pick up the nearest card and say the word.

If he knows it, he may put it into his pile, box or corner. If he is incorrect, tell him the word, and replace it in the circle.

The ringing of the bell can be varied by the tapping sticks, drum, turning the radio off and on as the signal to stop and find the card (like musical chairs.)

Make sure to change places and let him have a turn with the bell.

3. Record card and stars

ACTIVITY 4 DAY 5 MAKE OWN SENTENCES WITH WORD CARDS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- All word cards
- Paper and coloured pens

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Read one or two of his books

2. Go through his three letter words.

By this stage he should know how to sound out words he has not met before, but also start to recognize some of those he has met often, an essential stage.

3. Make sentences with some of the words he knows

Spread the words on the floor

Take it in turns to make a sentence from the words on the floor. Read it. Break it up and make another - or leave it if you have enough words.

These should be very simple to start with but can get longer and more tricky or silly.. (You can't worry about capital letters at the beginning of the sentence or question marks.)

They could include a question or a false statement. **"can a dog hop"** **"A red pig can sit on a pot"**

4. Teach "yes" and "no" and make or write some questions

Write out some "yes" and "no" cards. You could introduce a question mark too.

Using only known words including three letter words make up some questions.

Write these on your blackboard, paper or make them with your word cards..

"Is a pin big?" "Is a cat fat?" "Can a dog run?" "Is the sun wet?"

Your child can answer them with the card, or by giving them an appropriate big tick or cross, or copying the correct word "yes" or "no"

5. Copy and illustrate some silly sentences (with words he knows or can sound out,)

e.g **"The pup sat on a pip."** **"The hen has a hat on it's leg."**

He will love making these up, use the cards you have spread out on the floor and make new ones as needed.. He can use a few new words to make it more interesting.

6. Record sheet and stars

ACTIVITY 4 DAY 6 READING FIRST PHONIC READER

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Three letter word cards - including words from new reader .
- New phonic reader e.g. "Pud and Nip"
- You can cut it out and staple it to make a proper book or read it in situ.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Practice the three letter words in the reader

Use words from last page of reader. (Practice names with capital letters - explain about a capital letter for a name.)

Play a game with the words to check if they can be if he can sound them out - e.g. "Stepping Stones", plus another game or two if they are found to be fairly hard. Don't go on to the book today if they are too difficult, practice them some more so reading the book will be successful.

2. Practice reading a sentence or two made up from his cards.

Not the sentences in the book- some he made up yesterday.

3. Introduce new reader "Pud and Nip" (cut out and staple.)

(Introduce "Ann and the dog and the cat" similarly soon if this is successful.)

Let him read a page and then look at the picture carefully. Then re-read the sentence again. Go on to the next page.

3. Lots of celebrations and stars

He has just completed another important milestone!

Make some more readers on your computer using your own known words plus three letter words (or write them or use your cards) .e g. "Mummy can sit on a pin"

ACTIVITY 4 DAY 7 MAKE SILLY PHONIC READER

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Three letter word cards - including words from new reader
- Old phonic readers e.g. "Pud and Nip" " Ann and the dog and the cat"
- Silly sentences ready to be pasted into a book.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Read your known readers

Use words from last page of reader. (Practice names with capital letters - explain about a capital letter for a name.)

2 Introduce "Silly Sentences" if you have not done this before.

e.g. **"Sam sat on a ham"**

"Pig can hop and jig."

Let him read the first sentence and paste it in his book to illustrate. If he is good at it, read all the sentences before he starts to illustrate, if he finds it hard, let him have a rest drawing before he tries the next one.

3. Illustrate sentences to make own book

3. Read the whole reader again

Then read it to daddy and the cat.

Get a copy of the some commercial sequential phonic readers readers and gradually read the whole of the first series.

Then you will both be ready to be promoted to the next grade!

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 5 MULTISENSORY METHODS

Multisensory Method of teaching reading

The activity is based on the principles of the Multi-sensory methods of teaching reading, and I think there are some valuable aspects of this method that can be used particularly for some children.

It is based on the premise that we learn through all our senses and therefore as many of them as possible should be involved in the process of learning to read. The sense that is used in this method which is not used so greatly in other methods, is the sense of touch.

Using the sense of touch

Children are encouraged to use this sense by writing, tracing over and feeling the shapes of words and letters. This helps to impress them on their memory.

I believe we often underestimate our sense of touch. Did you know that you can read a word written on your back with a finger? Try it!

For children with very poor visual memories, remedial teachers use letters made of sand paper for the children to trace over until they become firmly imprinted on their memory.

Using modeling clay or playdoh/ confetti sized pieces of paper

This week the use of plasticine/ playdough/ modeling clay/ or home made play dough to fashion letters and words using this method. We used to use confetti as a fun thing to glue over words, but confetti is also no longer widely available. But you can make something similar by chopping up magazine pictures into tiny pieces - or even get your child to tear up tiny pieces to glue on a letter or word.

Tearing up and gluing pieces of paper, for instance to make a picture, is very time consuming - I can remember giving all my class an Easter egg outline to fill with lovely coloured scraps - when I needed them to be occupied quietly for some considerable time at the end of term while I did paper work!

If your child has real difficulty in memorizing shapes - this is an area of teaching you can expand. Just tracing over a word with a finger is a helpful activity. In the teaching of spelling frequent tracing of words is recommended. The very necessity to become involved in the learning process by actually doing something is also another basic educational principle.

Make your own play dough

A CUP OF PLAIN FLOUR

A CUP OF TABLE SALT (this makes it keep for ages).

A FEW DROPS OF FOOD COLORING (cochineal or whatever- not paint- it stains)

ADD WATER TO MAKE A STIFF DOUGH

KNEAD UNTIL IT IS SMOOTH

It will keep in the fridge for several weeks if it is rolled up into a good ball again every time you use it.

Try it with half a cup of each to start with and see how easy it is. Use a different colour for the next batch.

My apologies for the mess this equipment creates - but they are things most children enjoy.

If your child is finding some of the previous activities difficult, try these activities earlier in the program. For many children they can be used interspersed with previous activities for fun and variety.

ACTIVITY 5 DAY 1 INTRODUCE PLASTICINE/ PLAYDOH

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

New packet of plasticine, modeling clay, commercially sold playdoh, or the playdoh you have made.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Find words or letters your child needs to practice

Go through your pile of words and find some that are not well known. Put them aside. Get him to trace over them with his finger as he says them.

2. Introduce your new modeling clay or playdoh

Let your child have a bit of time playing with his new material.

Then write one of the difficult words on a piece of paper perhaps with a quick picture to be sure he remembers what the word means. Size about 4 or 5 centimeters - not too small, but not too big or you'll run out of material.

Then let him roll out his stuff and bend it around to make the letters to put over your writing.

Keep reminding him what the word is.

Repeat with other words if time and interest permits.

I can remember seeing a student teacher doing this with a class of children for a crit lesson, for me to write an assessment of her reading lesson. She did a lovely job of introducing the material then gave out paper for all the children to cover with play doh with a lovely big word written on each. The children worked very well, and she finished the lesson happily. BUT AT NO TIME HAD SHE DISCUSSED OR TOLD THEM WHAT WAS WRITTEN ON THE PAPER. It was a great craft lesson but no teaching of reading was achieved.

3 Go through word cards.

Go through the word cards again particularly the ones you have spent time on.

4. Record sheet and star If needed

ACTIVITY 5 DAY 2 INTRODUCE CARBON PAPER, CONFETTI

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Carbon paper or substitute like a cheap etcha sketch board
- Three letter words cards and pictures
- Paper with three letter words written clearly ready to trace, pencil, bulldog clips to clip carbon to paper.
- Confetti or substitute
- Clag or glue stick

(This is just a bit of fun providing an interesting and different way to practice three letter words)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Go through three letter word cards and pictures

Sort these into pairs.

Choose ones you would like to revise. Trace over them with finger.

2. Trace three letter words using carbon paper

a). Show your child how carbon paper works - which side must be facing down etc.

Show him how it makes an identical copy of the pictures he has drawn on a second piece of paper. Show him how the second piece is spoiled if the paper is moved.

He must use a pencil as a coloring pen is not firm enough to make a good copy.

b). Help him to clip a piece of clean paper under a sheet of carbon under a sheet on which you have written several of his three letter words, leaving room for a picture.

Ask him to trace over your words with his pencil and then draw a picture for each word.

Then unclip the paper and look at your results. (You may need several paper clips.)

He may then colour in his pictures with his pens.

c). He may like to copy several words again, making the first copy himself, with the carbon underneath, - or repeat the first activity.

3. Pasting over words with confetti or little pieces of cut or torn out paper

You may introduce a new glue stick or bottle of clag and the little pieces of paper.

ACTIVITIES 5 DAY 3 (onward) WORK THAT CAN BE DONE WITH LITTLE SUPERVISION

1. Copy interesting words on to blackboard or paper and illustrate
2. Make/illustrate interesting words/sentences with modeling material.
3. Make words with plastic letters.
4. Sound out and match three letter words with their pictures
5. Make as many objects as possible starting with “s” with playdoh.
6. Play favourite word or letter games alone.
7. Paste over words or letters with confetti or substitute or use carbon paper.
8. Make up own sentences with word cards.

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 6 ILLUSTRATING AND EXPERIENCE READING

Reading about his own experiences

Although the basic methods of teaching beginning reading remain the same, there are a variety of ways that reading material can be presented to a child.

The best way to get a child interested in reading, is ensuring the reading material reflects his own individual interests and experiences. In fact the most suitable reader for a child would be one written specifically about himself, his family, friends, pets and activities.

In some good schools large amount of the reading material provided for a child in learning to read is in fact written about the children in the grade and their own special interests and activities.

The child provides his own subject matter and talks about it in his own words which is then transformed into reading material.

Making your own individual reader

In a school class situation the teacher can plan experiences for the grade together and then plan reading to follow these experiences.

Following a visit to see Sally's pony, the grade learns the words "pony" "carrot" and "ride" and the teacher plans and makes up sentences about the visit. The teacher can then make duplicate copies of a reader specifically for her grade using this vocabulary and describing the children's experiences. This is a lot of work for the teacher but increases the motivation and really ensures rapid learning.

A one-to-one situation - with one teacher and one pupil, is an ideal learning situation for learning to read using experience reading. And these days it is not at all hard to make a book that looks like a real book using your friendly computer.

Making and illustrating experience books

As well as making a reader with controlled vocabulary about your child's individual experiences, it is valuable to let your child make his own book and illustrate it. This can then be read many times and more words gradually learned from it.

Your child can suggest the text - tell you what to write clearly on each page, then illustrate it himself. Your child will remember what he has asked you to write - so don't change it to better grammar for instance. You can build up several books like this - one about any special family activity for instance.

Sentences

One benefit of this work is an increased understanding of words and how words make up a sentence. What is a sentence? That is a really tricky question - involving an understanding of nouns and verbs, subjects and predicates. But basically it is the expression of at least one single thought - it always starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. This simple concept of a sentence can be taught at this stage.

Development of language ability

A further benefit of this work is the development of your child's language ability in preparation for writing his own sentences later.

This week your child is encouraged to tell you his own sentence for you to write down and for him to then illustrate. (He may not even wish to illustrate it - the writing and reading are the important part - the picture is to help him remember his own sentence.)

It may be a good idea, if he is somewhat inarticulate, to let him draw first - and then to tell you what to write. But in my experience this leads to "This is a house and a car and a boat and an aeroplane" type of sentence.

It is much better for your child to have really good think before he tells you what to write. Try not to interfere if he takes some time to think.

In a classroom it is always possible to tell if the sentences are directly from the children themselves or are teacher - directed because the children's sentences are always so much better!

Children seem to get right to the heart of the matter, and things that are important to them may not be important to you.

When we did the first day's work of this week two of Lindy's comments on her family were typical. "I have a little sister and she is bossy". and "I have a mummy who sometimes lets me have lunch orders". which was a very important occasional treat for this five year old. The most important member of the family came first in our book of course - our pet lamb.

When your child has dictated his sentence and you have written it as neatly as possible(or typed it on the computer), and he has drawn his picture, he will then be able to read his own book. Don't criticize his pictures by the way - it is his idea and just because you cannot see people's "tummy buttons" when they have their clothes on, it doesn't mean that they are not there and shouldn't be drawn in! He will have some reason for what he has done even if it is that he didn't leave enough room on the page to make daddy as big as the cat, or he got tired of drawing and couldn't be bothered giving anyone arms.

If you have written each sentence as he gave it to you, he will remember it easily and be able to read it and the whole book to you and the rest of the family.

The book then can be used as a source of words to isolate and learn, and constant reading of the book will assist this learning.

If you are traveling overseas for instance, or have a family member away from home, your child can keep a diary of dictated pages from a very young age - or dictate letters to the absent member, and this can be a valuable educational experience.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

The equipment suggested includes a new set of colored felt tipped pens. They are great if you do not already have them. The provision of some new drawing material will help to motivate this new activity - that is if there is any type of drawing material that your child does not already have available!

ACTIVITY 6 DAY 1 ILLUSTRATING AND DICTATING SENTENCE

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- New coloring pens/ crayons/ pastels or whatever.
- Drawing paper with a fold about 10 cm from the top or bottom. (I tend to use the bottom)
- Black felt tipped pen - to make quite a thick line.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Child draws picture

Ask your child to draw a picture of something interesting, but leaving the strip above or below the fold for you to write in, writing about what he draws. (You could type it at his dictation on your computer and print it out and stick it on his paper.)

2. Parent writes sentence

Ask him to tell you something interesting to write about his picture.

You may have to question him before he gives you an interesting sentence.

At first he may say "That is a house and that is a dog" - but try to encourage him to tell you what is happening in his picture by asking "Tell me about it in a different way" - "Whose house is it?" "What is the dog doing?"

Try to write it in very careful print with your black texta, for a clear easily read sentence. This is so he can read it himself again and maybe find some of the words he knows or would like to learn.

*Jemma's sentence: "Kip is growing in my mummy's tummy and that is the umbilical cord."
(After discussions with her doctor mother about the baby brother who was on the way!)*

3. Child reads sentence back again

Get him to read it once or twice. Then get him to point out some of the words. "Find "Kip", "mummy" which are known. "Which one do you think would say "umbilical?" "See if you can find it"

4. Repeat if time

He could do several pictures and sentences if interested and there is enough time.

ACTIVITY 6 DAY 2 BOOK ABOUT THE FAMILY

• WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Coloring pens/ crayons/ pastels or whatever.
- Black felt tipped pen
- Stapled booklet of drawing paper with folds along the bottom

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Writing sentences about the family (This will probably be more than one day's work.)

Write the sentences first, today: at your child's dictation.

Then ask him to draw a picture of what he has written.

Suggest - "We are going to make a book about our family. Who will we write about on the first page. What will we say about him?" and if necessary "Tell me something that he does?" Then write it.

Sam on his baby brother: "Jack has just turned one year old, he can walk and he can even run. He sometimes does what we ask him to".

About himself "I'm a preschooler now!"

Encourage sentences that are as long and interesting as possible.

2. Illustrate and read sentence back again

Ask him to illustrate the first sentence.

Re-read the first sentence before you go on to the next page.

Do a sentence about each member of the family including himself and any pets.

2 Read the whole book through as a story

Read it to other members of the family. Encourage him to read it many times himself.

ACTIVITY 6 DAY 3 PAINTING

Introduction to Painting and other mediums

For his activity you use painting is the major motivating activity, together with similar types of learning methods to those used previously.

This is really just another vehicle for experience writing.

Painting is a great joy to most children, and they rarely have as many opportunities as they would like to do their own painting. In my class room we always had two painting spots for our "Free activities" and art periods and it was always the most popular activity. But it is a lot of work to get ready!

Suggestions are given for making an easel. Powder paints are quite easily available, but are pretty expensive. You may need only red, yellow, blue and perhaps black. You can mix any colour from these or your child will learn how to do it himself.

Children's art work- confidence

Remember to keep any critical comments to yourself as regards your child's pictures.

You may need to build up his confidence to encourage him to really enjoy this. If you don't really enjoy drawing or painting, it is probably because you think what you do is not much good. However as far as even adult art is concerned these days it doesn't have to be realistic to be good. Try to give your child the confidence to be bold and try lots of bright colour and big bold outlines.

Decorative work

In a school when one is looking for really decorative work to put on display - one finds that almost every five and six year old is capable of something really good to look at, four year olds are even better. However once a child becomes older and much more self critical and worried about the realism of their art, then ever the best work is much less attractive to the onlooker than the beautiful bright bold decorative and symbolic work from the infant department.

Our son-in-law is quite a connoisseur of paintings and has some lovely modern art on their walls. But he also has framed quite a few of Sam's efforts at age two and three, which scattered among the other work is most decorative and hardly recognizable as child art!

Symbolic art

You need to remember that very young children firstly draw a symbolic representation of what they are seeking to illustrate - they include what they know is there -whether they can see it or not, and whether it would be possible to see it all at once.

Art teachers suggest that we do not give children our pictures to copy as they will quickly use our symbolism rather than developing their own. If your child says "I can't draw a house" - don't say "Go and look at a house - now draw what you see", - rather ask him to think about what makes up a house and draw what is important to him - rather than copying your adult effort. Ask him to tell you about his drawing. Praise his efforts to give him confidence. Even frame them!

Other mediums

There are lots of other wonderful art mediums for children just a few of which I will mention.

Wet pastel.

Wet a page and draw on it with pastel or chalk. Hang out to dry.

Finger paint

Made from a paste of water thickened with a tablespoon of corn flour and boiled. Add food coloring. Spread on a paper, smooth out all over the paper and draw lots of patterns. When tired of it hang out to dry.

Cut and paste and collage

Use magazine pictures, coloured paper, tissues, tinsel, glitter, almost anything you can think of to make a lovely bright picture.

Clay

Much nicer to use than playdoh - can be bought from an art shop.

Printing

Use cotton wool in a saucer dampened with poster paint.

Use a lid, a piece of wood, or best still a potato cut in half to make prints. Cut a pattern on the surface of the potato.

Painting and writing sentences

EQUIPMENT

Be aware that paint stains clothes , carpets etc! Prepare with paper on the floor or a drop cloth.

Sheets of large wrapping paper, any sort of large paper. (size approx 60 cm X 90 cm)

Paint in small jars, egg containers (mix it ready).

Large brush

Thick texta pen for writing sentence

Jar to wash brush, or separate brush for each colour or don't bother about mixing colors.

Rag to wipe brush and for emergencies

Smock, apron or very old clothes (One of dad's old shirts makes a very good smock)

Easel or substitute.

Substitute easel

A sheet of maisonite, canite, three ply or even heavy cardboard approximately 1 m by 80 cm makes a very good easel.

The painting paper may easily clipped on by two bulldog clips at the top, or attached by masking tape.

The paints, water etc, should be on the floor or a low table close by, preferably in a box, or something to minimize spills. The easel can be leaned up against a firm surface on a slight angle. A child finds it easier to do large paintings standing up, however if this

equipment is not available, the painting paper can be spread over a layer of newspaper on the kitchen floor

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Painting a picture

Pin up a sheet of butcher's paper on your easel if you have one, and get the equipment ready.

Discuss the mechanics of painting with your child. He will have learned some of the rules at day-care, preschool, school. He needs to be reminded to wipe his brush on the edge of the paint jar before painting or it will be likely to drip.

He needs to be reminded to wash his brush before he uses each different colour or they will quickly all turn grey. Make a fold about 20 mm from the bottom of the sheet of paper and ask him to leave that space for you to write his sentence,

Let him paint a picture and tell you about it later. (He may wish to tell you first, but a child's painting at this stage often turns into something very different to what was originally intended, as the paint is not very easy to control.)

The first attempt is likely too be largely experimental use of the paint, rather than a clear picture. Do not praise for realistic pictures at any stage.

2. Write a sentence under the picture

When he has finished, write a sentence he gives you about his painting under it in your best printing, large enough to be read from the other side of the room.

Ask him to read it to you a couple of times, then put it somewhere to dry.

3. Paint some more pictures

Let him do a couple more pictures with sentences under them if he is interested and there is time.

4. Pin pictures up

When they are dry, pin at least one or two up somewhere he can see them often for a few days, in his bedroom, or maybe the kitchen (Use blue tack and stick it to his wardrobe door).

This is so that he can read the sentences to himself over and over again. You must be sure that he knows exactly what you have written. You have to be careful to use exactly his own words, not your adaptations of them, or if you need to change it at all - to shorten it for instance - make quite sure he knows what you have changed.

Ask him to read them to you occasionally, and perhaps point out individual words.

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 7 NOTICES/ NATURE BENCH

What are these activities for?

These activities are again just a collection of the types of things that a small child like to do, planned to extend his knowledge of words and his realization of the usefulness of reading and writing

Writing of notices

In our house the writing of notices has always been a favorite occupation. *Over the years there have been many and varied notices on the children's bedroom doors - frequently such things as "No adults allowed in here" or "Elizabeth dus not want mum and dad to come into her bedroom" or "To mum and dad I am going away for a holiday under the table from Elizabeth"- written in a fit of pique.*

However there have sometimes been pitiful little notes like "To mum and dad I wish you would be kinder please. love from Elizabeth. answer" or the notes to the tooth fairy about the tooth that got lost at school - explaining why the glass was empty. As our children got older these were replaced by such things as "Do not pollute the environment" and lots of long lists of tasks to be accomplished in the holidays.

Your child's notices

The idea of this week's work is for you to write some notices at your child's suggestion, or for him to write them if he is able.

Make a nature bench

The second day's work, which revolves around planting and collecting things is suggested as an introduction to the whole area of observation of natural phenomena, and sorting and classifying and making something of what is observed. You can find many more ideas in the children's books available on science these days.

Children are very keen on making collections and this can be the beginning of a life long interest. There is an incredibly wide range of subjects to collect.

My young nephew had a collection of animal skulls -a most interesting and educational collection - assisted by his long suffering mother who used to cooperate when Martin found a skull with the flesh still on it, by boiling it down for him. I suppose that would be better than having the decaying member of the collection in the bedroom.

Set up your nature things on an appropriate bench or table near a window, or on the ledge behind the kitchen sink. Having somewhere where they can put the interesting things that they find motivates lots of observation.

I still find interesting things like bird's nests, lovely butterflies, birds eggs, I want to show to so

WEEK 7 DAY 1 MAKING NOTICES

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Cards - varying shapes and sizes

Coloring pens

Masking tape or blue tack

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Revision

Read the sentences under his paintings and the labels on his picture from last week.

2. Introduce cards to make notices

Show him the cards and suggest he may like to think of some notices he would like to put around the room - **bed, window, train-set** (like they do at school). You could put them around the whole house or a larger section than his room if you can put up with this for a time.

3. Make notices at his suggestion

Keep these very simple, even to just one word if he still finds sentences difficult, but encourage him to make them really interesting if you think he can cope with this.

a) You may have to suggest the first one to him- or give him the idea e.g. **"This is Peter's bed."** printed as large as possible on the card in your best printing. (Later he will probably want to print his own.)

These can vary in difficulty from a simple **"Peter's bed."** to **"Peter sleeps in this bed every night."** for example.

b). When you have written one, get him to tape it to the appropriate place. (Masking tape and blue tack can be removed from most surfaces if you don't leave it there too long.)

c). He will probably be eager to suggest the next one, and it will probably be similar to the first. If he has difficulty thinking of one suggest "What about one about your fish?"

Some examples **"These are my books."**

"My tadpoles live in this jar"

"Teddy is sleeping in the doll's house."

4. Different types of notices

You could suggest a notice to tell someone what to do.

He will prefer to tell someone else what to do!

e.g. **"Keep this door shut."**

"Don't forget to give me my pocket money."

Encourage him to think of his own signs (and accept them in good grace).

"No adults allowed in here"

"This is my own cubby."

"A home for my pet beetle."

He will remember the words much better in these than the ones you suggest.

(Some children may be able to write their own signs with some help.)

If this really catches on he will find many uses of notes, to write his own lunch order, or shopping list - (**"One pink and one white icy pole"**) or a note about what to wear in the

morning "**Blue shorts if hot, green dress if cold**". and many other things, even a message in a bottle to be dropped into the sea.

ACTIVITY 7 DAY 2 MAKING A NATURE BENCH

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Cards - and pen
- Masking tape or blue tack
- A saucer and piece of cotton wool to cover it and hold the water. (or several saucers)
- A handful of seeds, wheat, if you have a produce store near you they will give you a handful of the wheat you used to feed to your chooks -and some other seeds too.
- Or you can use other bird seed - canary seed, wild bird seed (and put some outside in your garden to see what birds you can attract.)
- An onion, just any onion, maybe quite a largish one.
- A cream or jam bottle to fit your onion which you can fill up to the top with water so the onion can sit on the top of the bottle touching the water. (To start with - later when there are roots they will reach down into the water.) It will grow a new top.
- Empty egg shell in an egg cup - save the bottom of a boiled egg filled with a bit of soil or sand.
- A bean or nasturtium seed (these grow fast) or one your child has found perhaps. Radishes are the fastest growing of all.
- Also any nature objects your child has found lately, e.g. moths, beetles, interesting leaves, stones, nuts, seed pods, toadstools etc.

THESE ARE ENOUGH FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

If you lift a log, stone or brick outside you are almost certain to find some sort of interesting live addition for your collection. (Slaters are fine, but don't encourage interfering with ants or spiders - just look!)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

There are far too many suggestions here for just one day, but choose one or two that appeal most, and continue later with the other ideas.

1. **Read the notices made yesterday.**

2. **Discuss setting up a nature bench as at school or pre-school** (hopefully they have one too)

Find a suitable spot. For along term project a place by a sunny window is ideal, but for a temporary initial attempt, the top of his chest of drawers or kitchen window-sill would do well.

Show him some of things and discuss starting to make a collection of nature things.

3. **Do the activity, then write a note about it.**

Choose two or more of the activities suggested below and after you have set them up together, suggest he might like to write a note so he will remember what he has planted, or so daddy will know, etc.

If you continue with the other activities later do notes to go with them too.

The notes can be as simple as "a beetle" or "This elephant beetle was trying to get in my window".

4. **Suggested projects:**

LET HIM DO THESE WITH AS LITTLE HELP FROM YOU AS POSSIBLE.

a). Planting wheat/ bird seed.

Place the cotton wool on the saucer, dampen it, and sprinkle the seeds on it. Keep it damp and in the light or sun, and the wheat or bird seed will begin to shoot in a very few days.

Watch for the root and then the shoot.

Type of notice - **"I planted this canary seed."**

"This wheat must be watered every day."

or even **"This is Jack's, do not touch it."**

b). Onion on a bottle

Find a jar to fit the onion or vice versa, so it will fit without falling in, but will touch the water when the bottle is filled .

Within a few days roots will begin to appear, and later green shoots from the top.

c). Plant a seed in an egg shell

Save the bottom of a boiled eggshell. Fill it with soil and plant a small seed, for instance a bean seed, in it. Keep it damp

d). Grow a carrot top

Cut a few centimeters off the top of a carrot and put it on a saucer on damp cotton wool. The top will soon sprout again.

e.) Grow Mustard and Cress

Mustard and cress seeds planted on damp cotton wool or a damp tissue grow very quickly, and can be cut within about ten days and used in sandwiches.

f.) Make a garden

All sorts of seeds, bird seed, bulbs, cuttings, cactus, seedlings can be planted in an pot or ice cream container filled with soil (with a couple of holes in the bottom for draining and something it can sit on to catch the excess water.) .

g). Make a collection

This can range from a simple collection of leaves of different shapes, autumn leaves, different coloured stones, to a more complicated collection of insects, butterflies, rocks, fungi etc. about which he may find a great deal of information.

ACTIVITY 7 DAY 3 BOOK OF INTERESTING WORDS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Small stapled book or plain paper notebook.

Coloring pens.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. **Read all his notices**
2. **Make a book of words**

Let him choose the most interesting words from the various notices and write them in the book, a word on each page, e.g. "an onion", "a beetle" etc

You may write the words for him or he may copy them from the notices.

3. **Illustrate the words**

Let him draw a picture for each of the words.

Write "My book of words" or similar on the cover.

Let him read it to the rest of the family.

ACTIVITY 7 DAY 4 LABELING OBJECTS IN A PICTURE

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Large paper
- Paint
- or old magazine, scissors, glue
- texta pens,
- cards

Make use of the paint while you have some mixed up and the easel out in the kitchen!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Paint a picture and write a sentence again

Continue to paint pictures and write sentences under this if this was very popular.

3. Paint a picture or cut out pictures and label the objects

a). Paint a picture on a large piece of paper and then at his direction label the objects in the picture individually.

or b). Pictures may be cut or torn from a magazine and pasted to form picture on a large piece of paper - suggest he choose coloured ones. Then you ask him to name the various parts of his picture, and you write the name beside the object.

4. Make cards to match the words on the large picture

Make a card to match each of those on his picture. Let him practice putting them under the matching word, then see if he can say them without looking at his picture.

5. Play a game with the words - “Stepping Stones” , “Fishing” , “Clap when you see”

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 8 WRITING STORIES

Ongoing activities

The final activities are to introduce you to an ongoing open ended type of activity which can be used by a child of any age for many years but would be probably too advanced for a pre-school or Prep grade level child even if they could handle all of the previous work.

It is particularly included for the advanced child, but also because it provides a basic method of encouraging children to write freely, but without the frustration of spelling errors, or attempting to spell the words they cannot manage. It is to enable a child to get the satisfaction of expressing himself in writing with every possible assistance given - that is, providing a word to copy whenever a child needs it.

It was fashionable some years ago to encourage children to write completely freely without any concern for the correct spelling. But the fallacy of this approach is that a keen reader knows what the correct word looks like, even if he cannot remember how to reproduce it, and to tell him to be happy with something he knows is incorrect is not a good learning option in my opinion and tends to limit a child to words he knows he can spell.

Writing Stories

The first attempt will be most laborious and hard on both of you, but most children have an inbuilt desire to express themselves and once they find that you are really interested in what they write they find this a most enjoyable and fulfilling experience.

I used this for years with Prep. Grade 1, and Grade 2 children. The older ones particularly would often prefer to stay and continue writing, rather than go out for recess.

However this stage may not come for a year or so –when children can read, they can also begin to write for themselves.

If I was teaching an individual child at home long term, I would base all of my language teaching on this activity.

Reading Activity

Through this activity children extend their reading ability - they must re-read what they have written frequently as they go on to the next phrase or sentence. It is also the most natural way to teach spelling and punctuation.

Individual dictionary

Initially it is probably easier to use a sheet of paper or card rather than an individual dictionary, to help a child to spell the word they wish to use.,and you will have to write every word. However a child soon remembers the words he uses frequently. Once he starts to use a simple dictionary, he builds up his own collection of words that he likes to use.

A suitable dictionary could be bought commercially, and these are plain paper exercises with a letter of the alphabet printed on each page and perhaps a few commonly used words also. However you can easily make one from a notebook in which you write the alphabet - one letter to each page, (make sure it has at least 25 pages - you can have XYZ on the last page). Or you can buy a "Where is it?" book with the alphabet already printed on each page and easily found. This has an advantage as your very young child

will spend much time looking for the appropriate letter as it is quite a complex skill remembering the order of the alphabet well enough to isolate a single letter. That is why a card is more suitable at first.. (But I would be happy if a child tries to write a word himself and gets it wrong. I would write it correctly on his work though.)

If you have a child who is away from school for any time traveling or ill, for instance, I would suggest keeping a diary using a dictionary to enable him to write what he wishes, and this would adequately cover a large amount of the work he would be doing at school.

With my grade 1 or 2 class in school I would spend a very considerable part of each morning with this type of work, which can be more efficiently done in an individual situation with one child and a teacher to provide the words immediately and read the ensuing work appreciatively as soon as it is completed. At school the children would sometimes do diary work - that is keeping a record of their own days, and other times write on topics that I suggest or of their own choice.

I would advocate the use of such a dictionary with children up to grade 5 or 6 if necessary as I believe children should not be inhibited in what they write by difficulty in spelling, but also believe that by writing a word incorrectly when writing completely freely, the child impresses that incorrect spelling on his mind when he might as well be learning the correct way.

ACTIVITY 8 DAY 1 INTRODUCING INDIVIDUAL DICTIONARIES

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Writing paper
- Individual dictionary with a blank page for each letter of the alphabet on which words may be written at the child's request,
- Soft pencil (2B)
- Rubber to remove unintentional errors. Children really appreciate this.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Introduce song/ditty "abc-defg-hi-jk-lm,no-pq-rs-tu-vwxyz"

to begin to teach the order of the alphabet -helpful when trying to find something in a dictionary. Revise it as a song frequently.

2. Introduce and explain dictionary

Spend some time looking at the dictionary.

Explain that you only write in the dictionary and he copies it.

Explain that when he is writing something and he doesn't know how to write the word he can look in the book to find the word he needs. If it is not there you will write it for him.

Explain how to use the index and how to find the right page for the word. Once he has been using this for a little while, he should be encouraged to find the right page and check to see if the word is already there.

But at first you will probably have to help him a great deal, and often find the page for him, or it will slow him down too much, and he will be likely to lose interest.

3. Encourage him to think of a sentence he wants to write and write it.

Maybe he can draw a picture first, or you suggest a topic - "His day at school", "His pet" and try out his new dictionary.

For the first few sentences you will probably need to write every word into his book before he copies it. Then you will find as he tends to use similar vocabulary and sentence structure from day to day, gradually he will be able to look up most words or remember them, and only need to be given new nouns and verbs etc.

Be very appreciative of his earliest efforts, as they require a large amount of concentration and effort from a child, even if they are not perfect in your eyes. But expect them to improve.

I have found that children's own undirected writing can be amazing. Let them use their own ideas and imaginations.

I can always tell if written work is teacher directed or child directed – the child directed work is much better, and more interesting.

ACTIVITY 8 DAY 2 WRITING A LETTER OR EMAIL TO GRANDMA, WRITING ABOUT A BALLOON

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Writing paper
- Individual dictionary
- Coloring pen or soft pencil(2B),
- Envelope and stamp
- balloons

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. **Practice ditty “abc-defg-hi-jk-lm,no-pq-rs-tu-vwxyz”**

2. **Introduce letter paper, envelope and stamp.**

Discuss where you put the stamp, where you can post your letter, or how you address an email

3. **Write a letter to Grandma , or maybe just write an email**

or some other friend who would be prepared to write an answer, or even daddy at work. Use dictionary to find words to use in writing a letter to send in the envelope.

4. **Address and post his letter or send the email. Straight away!**

And word up grandma to answer immediately.

4. **Writing topic for another day - write about a new balloon**

Blow up a new balloon. Write a story about it - describe it, what it could be used for, what may happen to it.

Play with it as a reward for good writing.

ACTIVITY 8 DAY 3 WRITING MORE SENTENCES

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Writing paper
- Individual dictionary
- Coloring pen or soft pencil(2B),
- Rubber

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Continue to practice ditty “abc-defg-hi-jk-lm,no-pq-rs-tu-vwxyz”

Practice finding a letter in the dictionary.

2. Continue writing sentences using dictionary.

Try to continue with this every day if he can cope, writing a sentence every day or so. Even if it is difficult at first it rapidly becomes easier. You can suggest a topic if he cannot think of anything to write about, but if you are really interested in his ideas, he will develop confidence in his own ability.

Some topics to get him started:

All about himself.

All about mum, dad, his whole family, his pet.

His best friend, his favorite toy

Dogs, cats, birds, elephants

Later more imaginative e.g. “I am invisible.” “I am an ant.” “I am an astronaut.”

But generally the best approach if he is tentative, is to suggest writing about something that happened that day, and he will gradually get used to thinking about this and remembering something he would like to write about.

INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY 9 USING COMPUTERS

Playing around

If you have a home computer it is most probable that your child already has some experience on it and maybe can do all sorts of things with it. Of course, you have already taught that a computer is mummy or daddy's valuable work tool and is not a plaything, as they can be damaged.

There are many programs commercially available to teach phonics, sounding, and such things - search on the internet. Like many of the commercially available activity books, these tend to be much more complex than this program and expensive, but could be good if you have a child you cannot motivate, or for extra practice in any of the activity areas.

It won't be long before your child is wanting to use the internet and email his friends.

One of the mums at a dinner party said that she emails her older children in their rooms from the kitchen to tell them that tea is ready!

Where to start

One interesting place to start is with a drawing program using the mouse. He can have fun changing the colors of the paint and the brush sizes. But the mouse is not really easy to control.

Another place to start is with you writing words your child knows. (Set the font and size at a suitable level, about 18 point, I suggest.)

Show your child how what you type or draw can be printed out.

Then you can type sentences for your child to read.

When you get to three letter words show your child where to find a "Y" for "yes" and a "N" for "no" and type sentences in the form of question.

Computer keyboards have capital letters

It is a problem that a computer keyboard has capital letters and although many are similar to lower case, the upper case letters also have to be learned. Don't start this too early or it will confuse your child who is just successfully learning lower case.

It is also very slow typing for a child to find the letter he wants even if he recognizes it.

(We used to teach touch typing to all our children from year 2 of primary school - there are good programs to do this at home).

Making his own words and sentences on the computer is something that he will enjoy doing as soon as he can read a little and is an essential tool to be mastered in our world.

You will have to teach him the shift key, the return key, the delete key and the space bar before he can get very far.