

11. The Home/School Connection

This program has a tightly woven home/school connection. The program provides the parents or caregivers with the program electronically in Phonics Too® and in this book form. The coach's manual for the multimedia version and this book aid parents and significant others in helping their students with readiness and initial reading. This is the essential connection in order to dramatically improve the reading of preschool and primary school students. Since teachers and school personnel have responsibility for many children and many subjects, it is difficult to spend much time with a single student. However, a parent devoting 25 minutes a day to these activities with a child can make a profound difference at the point when the child is ready to read and write.

Supplementary Activities for the School and Home

Frequent reading is always important to emerging readers. The object is reading and writing. Therefore, once your child is moving through the lessons with relative ease, it is important to extend reading into other areas. Storybooks, magazines, newspapers—all of these and others—are appropriate sources of reading materials for children. The idea is that reading becomes a common activity in daily life. It is important that both mothers and fathers read to, read with, listen to, and otherwise participate in the reading activities of young children. The following checklist will help you rate your child's reading opportunities and environment:



- Does your child see you reading?
- Does your child have a number of good early childhood reading books?
- Do you read to your child often (three times a week or more)?
- Do you allow your child to read to you often?
- Does your child have a public library card?
- Do you subscribe to early childhood magazines?
- Does your child have a quiet, well-lit place to read?
- Do you refer to studious people with derogatory names like “egghead” or “bookworm”?
- Are you patient when your child is not ready to do what you expect?
- Are you patient when your child does not do what others of the same age are doing?
- Do you encourage them in what they can do?
- Remember that children reach their maturity for reading at different ages: four, five, six, seven, etc. Be ready when they are.

Pointing and Reading

As soon as your child begins to move through the program, start pointing and reading. Older siblings, classmates, and other coaches can do this for the child in your absence. However, it will be best if you allow the child to read to you word for word from within this book or from a favorite book as they are able. The important thing is for the child and coach to do this reading together. It also creates a good situation for you to measure progress. In crowded schoolrooms, this can be accomplished with teacher assistants, volunteers, or other children in the class as well as with the teachers themselves.