

2. First Things First: Pre-Readiness

Before we begin, let's get some of the first things first about how children grow and develop. The first step is to take a close look at the pre-readiness stage of development.

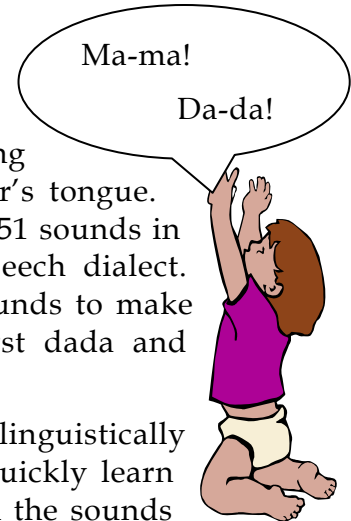
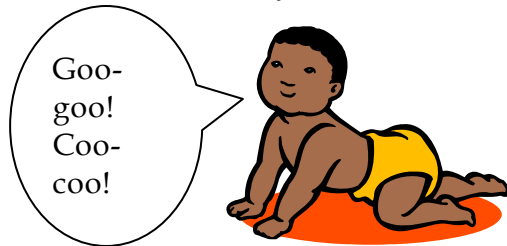
Sounds

Children come into the world capable of making the sounds of every language in the world. As they listen and respond, they quickly lock onto the sounds of those speaking around them. These are usually the sounds of their mother's tongue. There are not many of these sounds. The program identifies 51 sounds in

the general American speech dialect. Children use these 51 sounds to make words from the very first dada and mama.

Children are linguistically specific wizards. They quickly learn to shape oral words from the sounds that they use. Even severely limited human beings can be expected to learn the oral language at an early age. This gift of language specificity allows almost all children to learn quickly to read and to write the printed symbols for these sounds. When the children are ready, the reading and writing will flow, just as easily as the oral language flowed.

Therefore, the program does not teach sounds. Children already know these. The program helps children see the relationship between the oral sounds that make words and the written symbols (letters) that represent these sounds and words in writing. The children come with great knowledge and aptitude in using sounds and making words. The program builds on this ability, leading children naturally into reading and writing through the recognition of written symbols and written words. Some programs deal with more or less than 51 sounds. However, the following 51 symbols present the most useful representation. They will be organized this same way throughout the program and called the Expanded Teaching Alphabet (ETA):



Aa Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ee Ff Gg Hh

Ii Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Oo Pp Rr

Ss Tt Uu Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz er sh

ch th th wh oo oo oi ur or ou/ow

qu aw/au air ar ear ing ang ung ong

a, e, i, o, and u have two sounds
each. The one with the line over it sounds
like the name of the letter

Words and Naming

Not only do children bring an entire repertoire of sounds to the experience, but they also bring a large vocabulary of words learned from their earliest days. The program capitalizes on these two wonderful features: sounds that children make and words that children know.

Shortly after birth, a child begins to learn the names of everything in the world around—*cat, bed, pig, hot, run, jump*, etc. Perhaps you've seen your child joyously going from object to object and calling names. The program carefully selects words which children know and which also contain the sounds that relate to the written symbols. Working from these two—words and sounds—that the child knows, sense is given to the written symbol or letter. The sounds and letters are in the context of words. The words are in the context of a sentence. The sentences are in the context of readings or writings. Remember that your child learned to talk in the environment of others talking, not in isolation, sound by sound.

The words selected are words common to the child's vocabulary; yet, as the program progresses, the lessons become more interesting and challenging. In all, there are 40 words used to introduce the sounds and the corresponding written symbols or letters. The 37th lesson includes four words: *sing, sang, sung*, and *song*.

Lesson Words Used In The Program			
cat	sun	feather	saw
bed	jump	wheel	dog
pig	lemon	moon	chair
hot	volcano	book	heart
run	ax	oil	tears
ape	yo-yo	turtle	ring
eagle	zipper	horse	sing
kite	fish	unicorn	sang
window	child	house	song
cute	three	queen	sung