

6. The Vision

The *Reading, Writing, and Phonics Too* vision follows the national effort to ensure that all students are able and enthusiastic readers. Not only does the program use the tools—phonics, phonemic awareness, common sound/spelling relationships, integration with literature, etc.—but it also delivers lessons to facilitate the efforts of parents, teachers, and most importantly, children themselves, in this most important process of teaching and learning to read and write.



Recommendations for Use and the Challenge

All but the exceptional few children can become able and enthusiastic readers and writers. To meet this challenge, a school or home should allow the student a half hour per day in school or at home for pursuing the program as designed. The program is effective when used for acceleration in kindergarten and prekindergarten for those students who are ready. It may also be used effectively for recovery in second and third grades and in homes, labs, and resource rooms.

This book encourages and guides the home and school in giving the students a helping hand. This section of the book is for teachers, parents, caregivers, and other coaches. What is included here is a brief overview of how the home/school connection works.

Getting Started: First Your Child Will Need a Helping Hand

Since the purpose is to help your child to be an able and enthusiastic reader and writer, it is important to proceed within the capabilities of the child, respecting the pace with which your child can proceed. Please read this section of the book before you begin with the student lessons. As you enter the student lessons, you will serve as the child's coach. Look to this early part of the book to help you understand the program. Work the first two lessons to learn the main operations. Once you learn these, you can easily coach your child.



Pointing and Reading

The program may be enjoyed by children at various levels of readiness. If it is clear that your child is not ready to enjoy the lessons at their presentation level, you may proceed in two ways. You may skip to the next section of this book and follow the pre-readiness suggestions. Or you may allow the child to proceed through the lesson, allowing the child to respond orally. This will work in every case except for the printing lesson. Even the writing lessons can be accomplished by creating oral compositions.

Your child will be ready when the routines of the lessons are easy to manage without frustration—frustration to you and/or to the child. As with all early reading coaching, you will point and say the responses yourself. Next, have the child point and you say the responses. Next, you point and have the child say the response. To avoid frustration with this last step, prompt the child freely when it is that child’s turn to respond. This activity is the same as when the child points to words on the printed page in a storybook, and you read the words from the printed page. The part on pre-readiness will have other helpful clues for a child not yet ready to read.

Following the Program

Students should follow the program as it is written. Encourage your student to stay in the activities until all the work is complete. The lessons, which center on 40 lesson words with the 51 sounds that the lesson words introduce, build on one another. The better the mastery of one word and its sounds, the easier it will be to read as the readings get more difficult. The last step in each lesson gives students opportunities to print and write. The more writing, the better it will be, and the better the reading will be. Getting the flow going and keeping it going is the idea! In the beginning, some children may struggle to write the first word, *cat*. Encourage them by having them read their own writing, even if it is just letters, one word, or perhaps, even nonsense writing. Once children can construct words from the sounds and letters within their own heads, they will always be literate. A word of caution is that there will be a tendency to skip words that the students already know by sight. Resist this tendency. The phonemic awareness and the sound/letter correspondence necessary to attack yet other words are embedded in each lesson. Skipping through the program short-circuits the building of word attack skills.



Sharing the Readings and Writings

Once students have progressed to the end of the first word and sound lesson, “cat,” they have the opportunity for writing their own words. When this happens, the writings become a portfolio of writings. Two advantages occur for the students. They can read their own writings and reread the readings—for example, the “cat” readings of the first lesson.

One sign that students are on the route to good reading is when they can read back to you what they have written. It does not have to be exactly correct in the beginning. The idea is that they understand that the written letters and words represent oral sounds and words. Mind to page, or page to mind—these are opportunities to see the connection. Even make-believe reading from a printed page will help. Have the students try to read everything they write, even pretend writing.

Extension Activities

As early as possible, create extension activities that lead the student to relate the work in the book to work on other forms of the printed page. Integrating these activities into everyday life can be very helpful and lots of fun. Try some of the following extension activities. Some are more difficult than others. Provide all the helping and prompting that you want to. Remember, if you or the student are frustrated, the activity is too hard. Save that activity until the student is older.

- Help write and read the grocery list.
- Help read the TV guide.
- Start a scrapbook and/or photo album with written or typed captions.
- Start a journal of writings and drawings, perhaps only drawing at first.
- Write and leave notes for one another; at first, just a word like, "Hi!"
- Write down reminders even if you have to help read them.
- Read directions on cans, packages, and recipes out loud.
- Write, illustrate, and read letters, cards, and notes to family members.
- Read road signs and billboards.
- Play alphabet games: "Who can find the letter a, b, and so forth? Of course, x, y, and z are very hard to find."
- Read cereal boxes and play the games on them.