

Helping your Child to Read

Excerpt from Chapter 6 -High Frequency Words

Games to Play using Keywords

Once your child brings home keywords to learn to read there are a number of fun ways that you can use to help them to commit these words to memory. Often these words cannot be sounded out therefore your child will be focusing on the shape of the letters that make up the word. E.g.



Please note that many of the initial games only require your child to recognise the shape of the word. They do not need to be able to read the word itself.

1. Make up shapes to fit the words (as above) and see if your child can match them
2. Make up playing cards with 2 sets of the words to be learned. Mix them up and turn them over on a table then take turns in turning over two cards at a time to see if they match. If they do then you win the pair, if not the cards are turned back over in their original place and the next person takes their turn. This is also good for improving visual memory.
3. How quickly can they find one of the words in their reading book (or on a certain page)?
5. Make the words with Playdough, letter tiles, and magnetic letters. Write the words using pencils, pens, on the computer. Paint the words, write them in chalk outside etc.

As your child learns to read more sight words other games can be played.

6. Play “Who am I?” Again the words need to be in front of your child and then you say “I begin with a “t”, I have 4 letters. Etc. As your child builds a more extensive vocabulary or increases their understanding of language the clues become harder e.g. I have 1 vowel, I rhyme with sack etc. Take turns so that your child provides you with the clues.
7. “Start Again” This is better when there are more than 2 players. Make up a set of all the keywords your child knows. Then include about four cards with the words ‘Start Again’ written on them in a different colour (the number of “Start Again” cards can be increased according to how many keywords you have in your pack). Each player has to pick a card and say the word correctly and then they keep the card. However if they draw a ‘Start Again’ card they have to put all of their cards back on the bottom of the pile and start again. The “Start Again cards are discarded once they have been turned over. The player with the most keyword cards at the end wins.
11. Beat the Clock. Write the words out in a line and your child has to see how many words they can read correctly in 1 minute. If the list isn’t achieved the first time then each day the object of the game is to beat their score from the day before.
12. Make simple wordsearches using some of the words. Don’t make them too complicated though. For example only write the words from left to right, do not write them backwards.
13. Which Word is Missing? Put some of the words in front of your child, allow them to look at them for a while and then take one away whilst your child turns away. Your child then has to guess which word is missing. Judge how many words to use according to your child’s success. Initially you may only want to use 3 cards. When

your child is really confident with some of the words you could use letter tiles, show them the correct spelling of a word then jumble the letters up for them to put them back in the correct order. Or write a word, tell them what it is supposed to be but leave out one letter and they have to guess which letter it is. Again take turns so that they have a go at asking you to solve the problem. Children love that especially if you get it wrong!

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