

# Embracing Success: Educating Students With Down Syndrome



**Early Reading: Building a Foundation**  
**Eleanor Stewart, M.Ed.**



**Down Syndrome  
Research Foundation**

*Together. Hand in Hand.*

# Outline



- Building a foundation: Where to start
- Part One: High Meaning Sight Words
- Part Two: Letter Sounds
- Part Three: Phonological Awareness
- Part Four: Interactive Reading
- “Extras”

# Building a Foundation: Where to Start



Imagine being introduced to the student described on the following slide.

Where would you begin?

What details would shape the planning of your first lesson with this student?

# Learner Profile

Student's Name: Sam

## Interests

**Names of family members:** Mom, Dad, Liam (younger brother), Haley (older sister), Nana, Pops

**Birthday:** July 6, 2010

**Favourite activities:** Blowing bubbles, playing on the train table, playing with his farm animals

**Favourite sports:** Hockey, swimming, riding bike

**Favourite foods:** Pizza, apples, bananas, cereal, cookies

**Favourite travel destinations:** Victoria to visit family, Mexico

**Favourite music:** Playing drums, The Wiggles, Bruno Mars

**Favourite movies/actors/actresses:** Finding Dory, Zootopia

**Favourite athletes/sports teams:** Canucks

**Any other topics of high interest:** Putting mail in the mailbox, grocery shopping with the little "shopper in training" cart

**Please list a few or many of the sight words he/she already knows:**

Sam      car      go      train      play      eat      !

**Comments:** Sam uses some signs to express wants and needs, most commonly used are: more, please, milk, eat, play, all done, Sam loves to use the iPad for any reason (doesn't have to be a preferred activity), Sam loves to see pictures of his family, especially Nana and Pops.

# Planning



## One to One New Student Information/ Learning Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Interests:

Strengths:

Challenges:

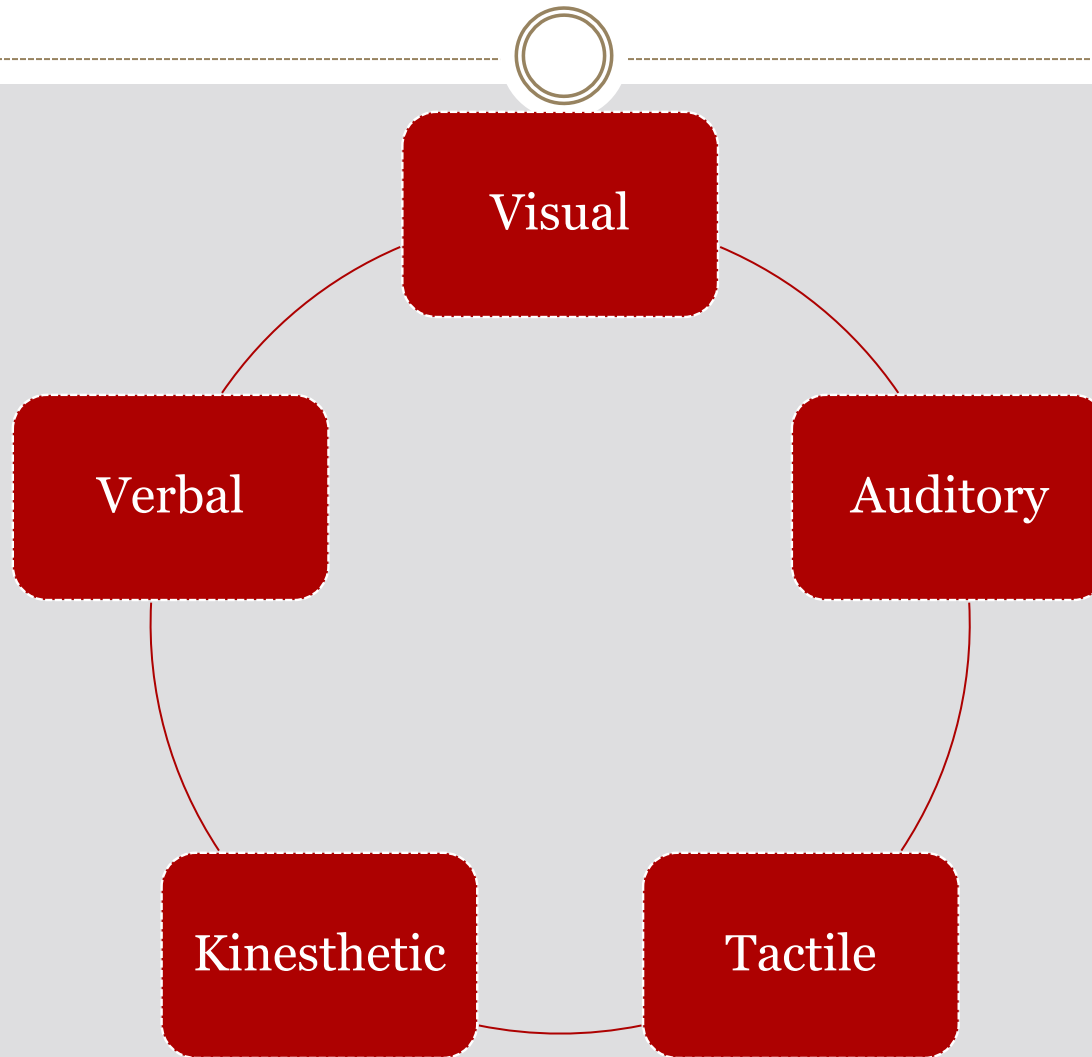
Goals:

Words to start with:

Books to try:

Activities to try:

# Multi-Sensory Learning



# 9 REASONS TO USE VISUALS

www.northstarpaths.com

@kwiens62



- VISUALS ARE PERMANENT  
(SPOKEN WORDS DISAPPEAR)



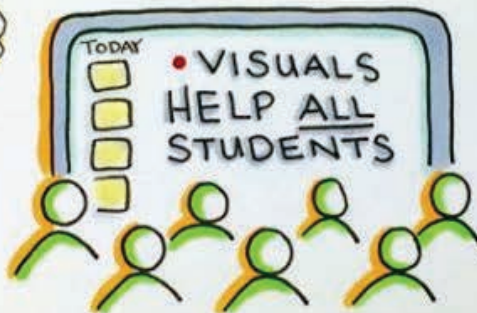
- VISUALS ALLOW TIME  
FOR LANGUAGE PROCESSING



- VISUALS PREPARE  
STUDENTS FOR TRANSITIONS



- VISUALS HELP KIDS  
SEE WHAT YOU MEAN



- VISUALS  
HELP ALL  
STUDENTS



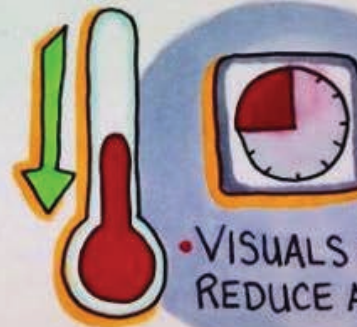
- VISUALS HELP  
BUILD INDEPENDENCE



- VISUALS ARE TRANSFERABLE  
BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTS  
AND PEOPLE



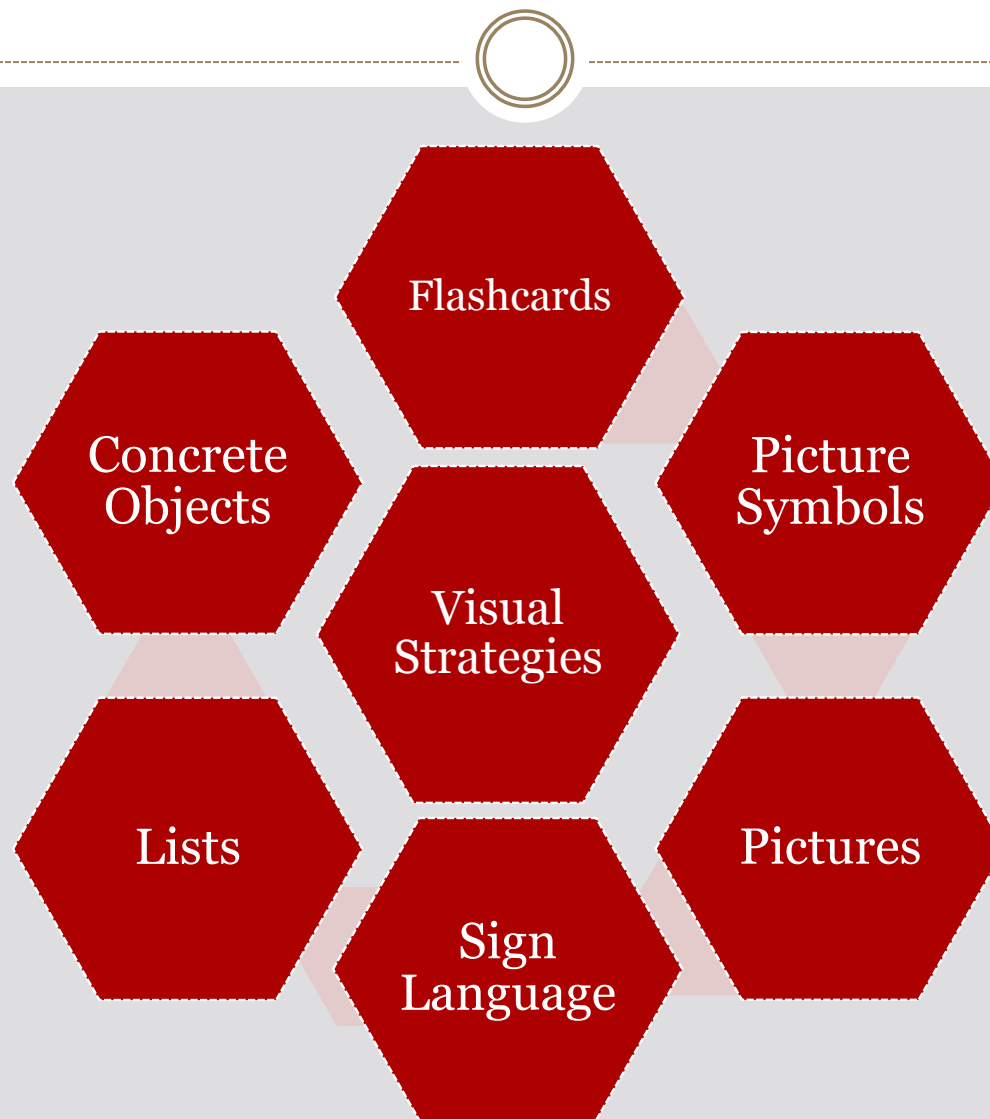
- VISUALS HAVE NO ATTITUDE  
• NO TONE • NO FRUSTRATION  
• NO DISAPPROVAL



- VISUALS HELP  
REDUCE ANXIETY

Kristin Wiens 2017

# What are some Visual Strategies?



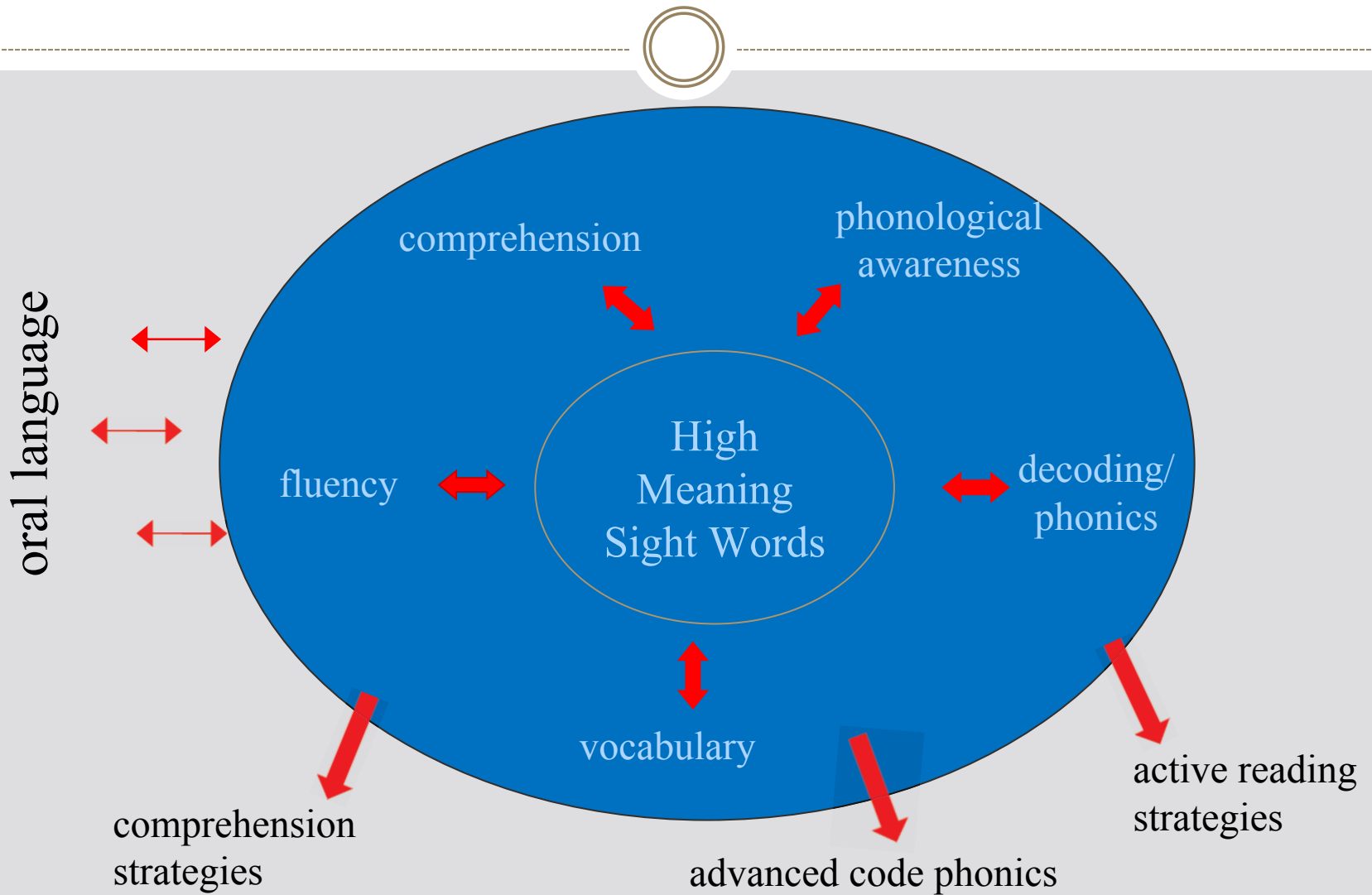


# Strength-Based Alternative



- Traditional phonics based literacy is a “bottom-up” approach
  - Individual phonemes then whole words
  - “c”+ “a” + “t” → cat
- Whole language is a “top-down” approach
  - First access text, then whole words then individual phonemes
  - “The cat played in the sunshine with his big, red ball.” →  
cat → “c” + “a” + “t”
- Strength Based Alternative: Using high meaning sight words is a “middle-out” approach
  - First build a bank of high meaning sight words, then use in increasingly longer texts and in phonological awareness and phonics skill building

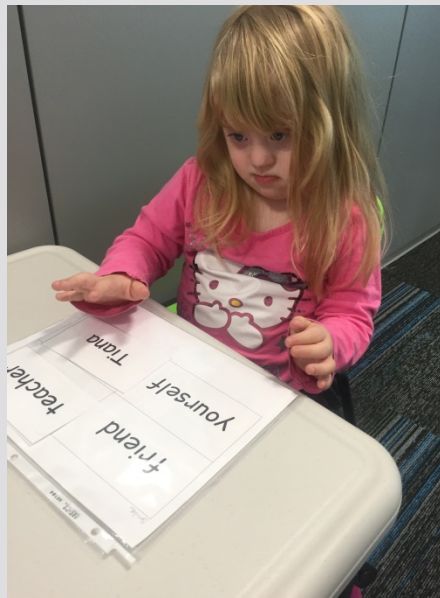
# Enhanced Reading Instruction



# Part One



# High Meaning Sight Words



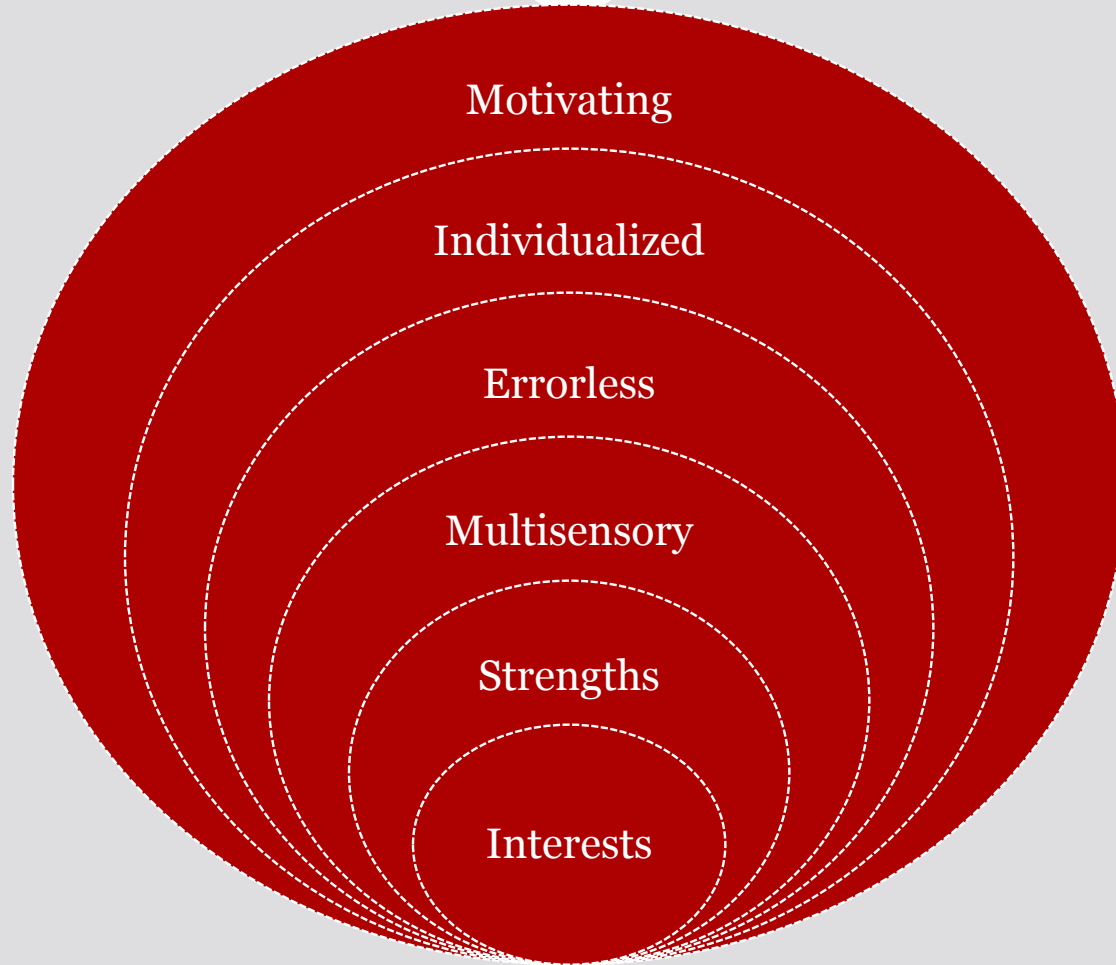
# Match, Select, Name



- **Match-** match a word to a word on stationary grid
  - Or if student does not like the grid... magnetic cards on white board words, large taped grid on floor, drive word to parking spot etc.
- **Select-** select word from array
  - Or feed the puppet, swats with the fly swatter, jumps on the word card on the floor etc.
- **Name-** student names or signs the word
  - Or selects object/ picture to show they are reading word, or repeats after you if not yet at this stage

<https://youtu.be/d2aqG9PzXBo>

# Recap



Motivating

Individualized

Errorless

Multisensory

Strengths

Interests

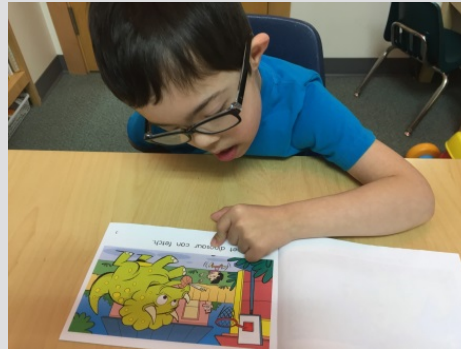
# Practice Time!



# Personalized Books



- Motivating- use interests
- Simple language, gradually increase difficulty
- Repetitive, patterned
- Use photos or pictures
- Use Word or iPad apps (Pictello, Special Words)
- Repeat sentence structure and patterns in various books



# Read and Do Activities



• Concrete examples, real-life situations

• Responsive teaching, follow the child's lead

• Build receptive language, help reading!





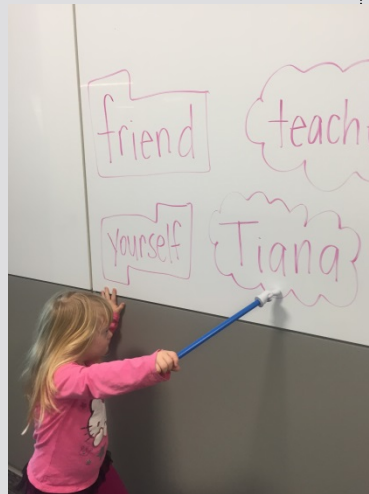
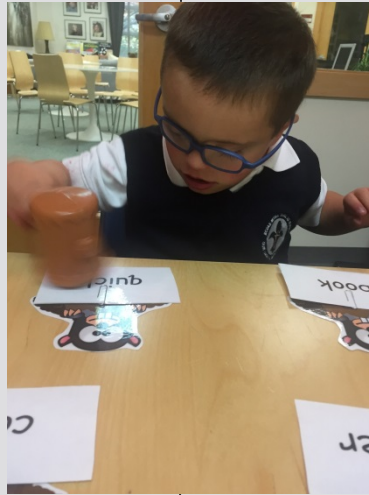
# Examples



- We Make Cookies
- Picnic
- Up and Down
- In and Out
- Get Dressed
- I Pick Up
- Happy Birthday



# Reinforcement Games



# Reinforcement Games



# Sample Plan for a Beginning Reader



## Week One

- Introduce new book
- Teach 2, 4, 6 new sight words (M,S,N)

## Week Two

- Review book
- Teach 2, 4, 6 new sight words from the same book (M,S,N)

## Week Three

- Review all words and book
- Teach any new high frequency words found in book

## Week Four

- New book with same words
- Review all words

# Part Two



# Letter Sounds



# Letter Names and Sounds



- **Focus on sounds**
  - Demonstrating knowledge receptively
  - Emphasize vowels
- **Activities for teaching letter names and sounds**
  - Trace letters, write them in the sky, pointing or selecting with a special pointer or witchy finger
  - Make letters – glue and grains or stencil and glitter
  - Jolly phonics or other sequential phonics program
  - Select and mail ...or... find and put in a container
  - Letter Boxes (Lakeshore/ Wintergreen)
  - Letter on the Bus
  - Letter Sound Hockey
- **Most of the games used to reinforce high meaning sight words can be adapted to practice letter sounds**

# Skill Sequence Break Down



Select correct letter for given sound with a visual prompt (sign or action)

Selects correct letter for given sound without visual prompt

Provides correct letter sound for letter given with a visual prompt (sign or action)

Provides correct letter sound for letter given

Identifies beginning, middle, and final sounds

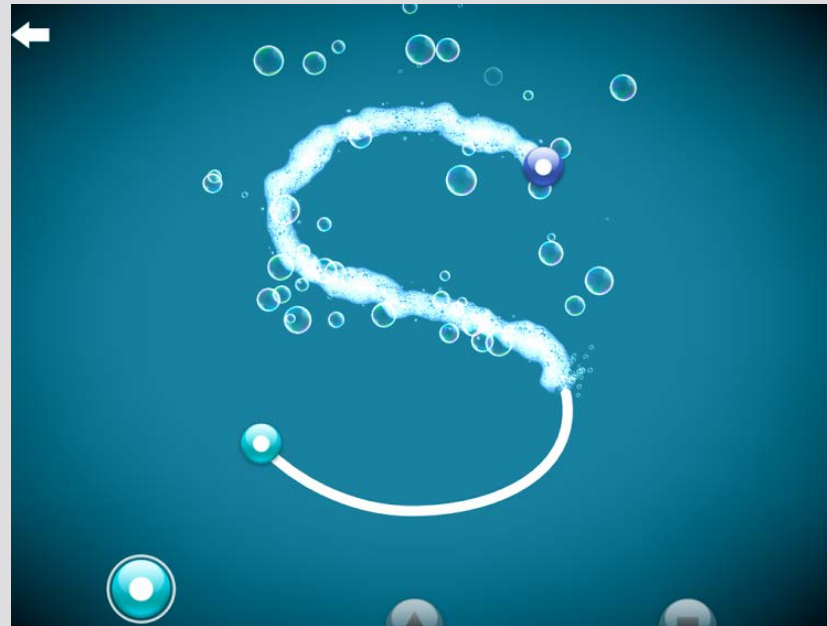
Selects correct letters to represent sounds of segmented CVC words

Spells CVC words

# Letter Names and Sounds Apps



- Starfall
- Letter school
- Fish School
- Word Wagon
- Interactive Alphabet
- SuperWhy
- Pocket Phonics
- Letter School
- ABC Magic





# Example of Varied Repetition



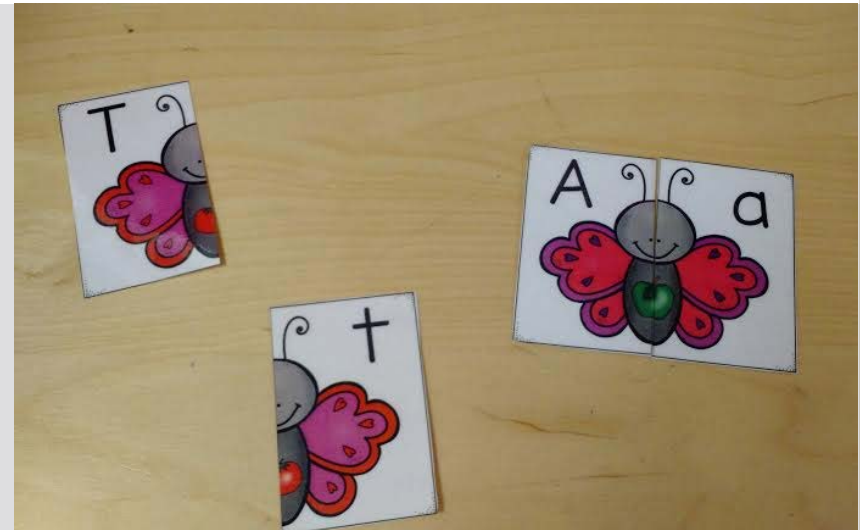
**LETTER A**

Help Ally the alligator find her uppercase and lowercase letter A's.  
Circle or color over only the letter A.



A s a n b  
Y J t G  
a s A A K  
R x  
W a h A  
a i m A h P  
b c A a u t

[www.momonthemove35.com](http://www.momonthemove35.com)



# Extension Activities



## Where to go after letters/sounds?



- Digraphs – new sounds (wh,th,ch,sh)
- Word Families – at, en, ig, op, un, etc.
  - Blends – bl, sl, cr, gl, etc.

# Part Three



## Phonological Awareness

**Phonological Awareness:** The ability to reflect on and manipulate sounds without pairing with text.

- Syllable awareness, word segmentation, rhyme awareness and **phonemic awareness**

**Phonemic Awareness:** The ability to reflect on and manipulate the individual speech sounds (phonemes) in a word.

- Research has found that phonological awareness in young **TYPICALLY** developing children is the best indicator of future reading ability. **BUT...**



# Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Skills



Participates in segmenting activities- sounds, syllables and words

Segments 2 syllable words into syllables by tapping or clapping

Segments CVC words into phonemes

Blends sounds given verbally to identify CVC words (ie: student is shown 2-3 picture cards and asked, “what word am I saying? d – o – g )

Imitates letter sounds

Chooses pictures of objects beginning with a given sound

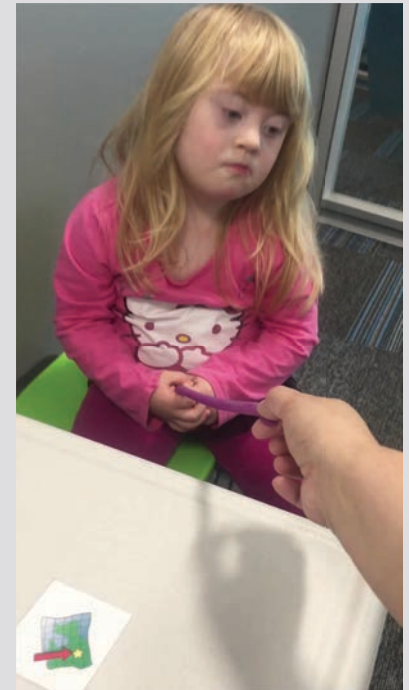
Identifies sound positions

# Phonological Awareness Activities



Some tried and true activities:

- Sound Discrimination – Same and Different
- Initial Sounds – Tell Me, Sound Boxes, I Hear With My Big Ear
- Syllable Segmentation – Bee, Bee, Bumble Bee, Clap it out
- Sound Positions- Beginning, Middle, End Train
- Phoneme Segmentation – Word Stretching



# Part Four



## Interactive Reading



# Dialogic Reading



- **Shared and Interactive** reading with picture books
- **Prompt:** prompt your child to say something about the book
- **Evaluate:** child's response, praise, offer alternative, encourage
- **Expand:** child's response by rephrasing and adding information to it
- **Repeat:** repeat the prompt to make sure your child has learned the expansion

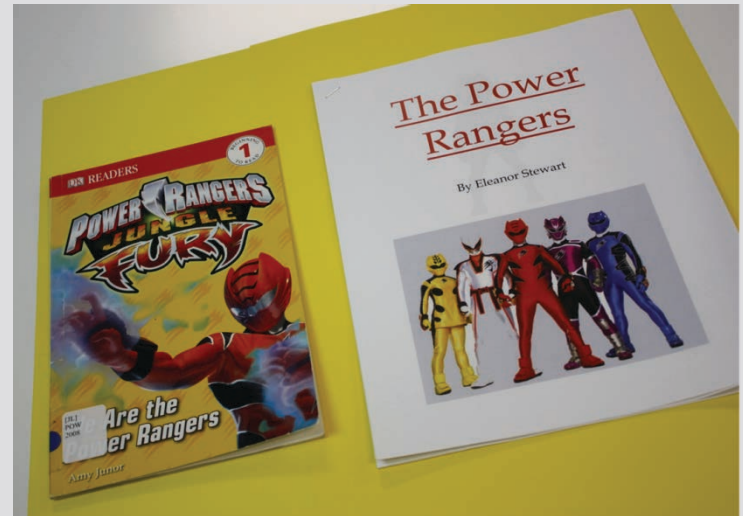
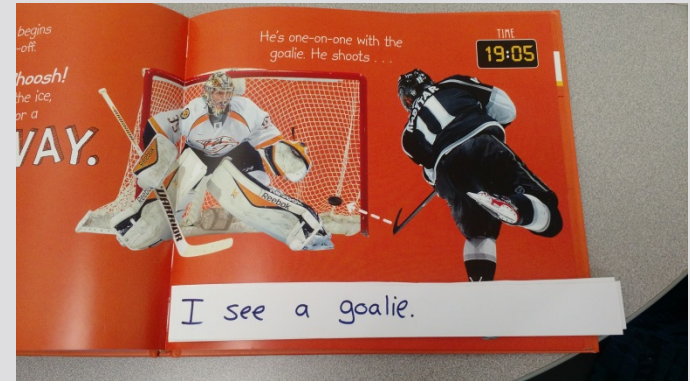
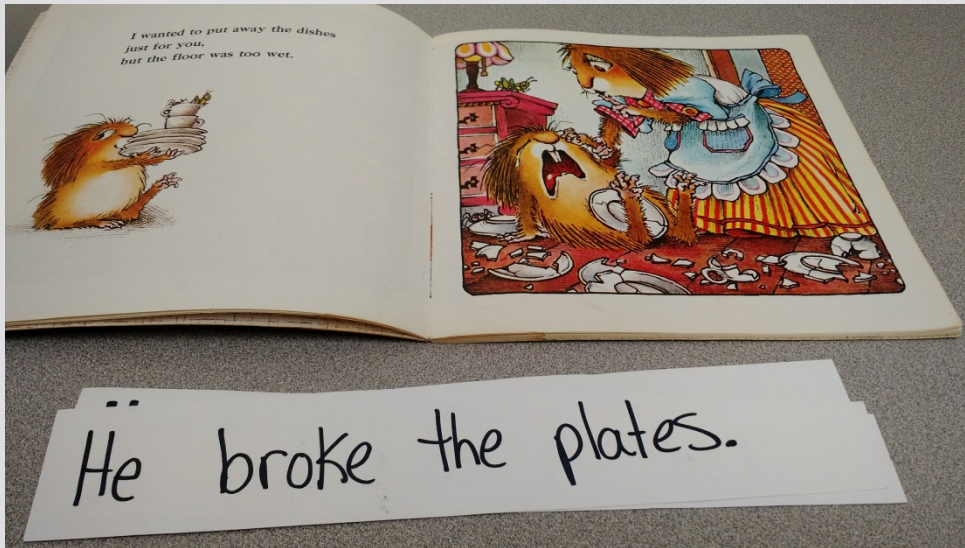
# Varying Our Prompting



- **C –completion**
  - Leave a blank at the end of a sentence
  - Brown Bear, Brown Bear what do you \_\_\_\_\_?
- **R- recall**
  - Questions about what happened in the book after you have read it
  - The Bear saw a goldfish, what else did he see?
- **O –open ended**
  - Focus on the pictures in the book
  - Tell me what you see on this page
- **W –Wh-Questions**
  - Start with who, what, when, where, why
  - Who did the teacher see? What colour was the dog?
- **D –distancing**
  - Relate words and pictures from book to outside experiences
  - We saw a bird in our backyard. What else did we see?



# Predictable Patterned Texts



# Reinforcement of other learning



- Phonological awareness
- Phonics
- Concepts of print
- Sight words

# 10 Things To Do With The Same Book.



- Letter/Word Hunt
- What's that Sound?
- Clap it out!
- How do books work?
- Picture/ Word I Spy
- Post it note questions/ completion sentences
- Funny Voices
- To, With, By
- Act it out, add props
- Make a similar book/ sentences

# The Concepts About Print Song



Tune: Frere Jacques

Where is the front of the book?  
Where is the front of the book?  
It is here. It is here.  
I found the front of the book!  
I found the front of the book!  
Here it is. Here it is.

Where is the back of the book?  
Where is the back of the book?  
It is here. It is here.  
I found the back of the book!  
I found the back of the book!  
Here it is. Here it is.

Where is the title of the book?  
Where is the title of the book?  
It is here. It is here.  
I found the title of the book!  
I found the title of the book!  
Here it is. Here it is.

Where do I begin to read?  
Where do I begin to read?  
From left to right. From left  
to right.  
I know where to start to read.  
I know where to start to read.

# What Now?



## Implementation Tips

- Manage the environment
- Fast, fun and frequent
- Use a visual schedule
- Tailor to individual interests
- Create a personal book bin
- Display personal words
- 30- 45 minute sessions: 1-1 or with classmate(s)
- Participation in class activities with adaptations and modifications
- Send home materials for practice

# Reinforcement Sessions



- Sight Words and Book Reading
- Letter Sounds
- Phonological Awareness
- Concepts of Print and Text Interaction

# When in Doubt...



- Positive reinforcement: praise, encouragement and preferred activities
- Sing!
- Do something physical: jump on words, bowling, throw a bean bag
- Add a prop: microphone, pointer, flashlight
- Put something inside something: words into a box, letters into a basket OR... Take something out!
- Share the Work: Take turns doing tasks

# In Your Toolkit



- Blank grids and flash cards
- Fly swatter
- Plastic bowling set
- Magnetic wand
- Puppet
- Bus cut-out
- Bean bag
- Flashlight
- Spinning top
- Magnetic board
- Tub of sand or rice
- Fun containers
- Small blocks or poker chips
- Stretchy snake or shoelace
- Syllable picture cards
- Small drum
- CVC picture cards
- Letter cards- upper and lower case
- Milk cap lids
- 'Hockey sticks'
- Post-it notes
- Train image and visual placeholder



# Be Resourceful



- **Subscribe to Blogs:** They give you free resources and ideas!
  - <http://www.classroomfreebies.com/>
  - <http://growingfirsties.blogspot.ca/>
- **Teachers Pay Teachers-** [www.tpt.com](http://www.tpt.com)
- **Think, Educate, Share –** [www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)
- **Florida Center for Reading Research-** [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org)
- **Reading A-Z –** [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)
- **The Measured Mom-** [www.themeasuredmom.com](http://www.themeasuredmom.com)

# Questions



Eleanor Stewart

[eleanor@dsrf.org](mailto:eleanor@dsrf.org)

