

Sight word lists: (Please ask for lists)

There are many, many recommended **sight** (recognising from memory or sight alone-rather than sounding out) word lists for beginning readers and spellers. This is the one we work from. Please be aware that categorising each list by colours is arbitrary and not something to get 'hung up on'. The aim for beginning and early readers is to be able to read all these words off the list BUT more importantly to be able to recognise and read them in books, posters, labels etc. The longer term aim is also to be able to spell these words correctly from memory (rather than just copy) AND use them fluently in their writing. ALL children need to practice both reading these words and spelling them (a few words at a time until 'mastery' is achieved, which helps their confidence, flow and fluency with reading and writing and frees them up to think about communicating their ideas without getting 'stuck' with these basic words.) Children will work through these at different rates and often can read them long before they can correctly spell them.

How parents can help: Just like any skill reading and spelling require practice. Children only learn to swim if they have the opportunity to get into the water regularly (not just once a week at a lesson) and practise in fun and non-threatening ways. They need to be encouraged and shown explicitly how to learn to swim and have scheduled time to practice again and again, they need to be taken to water and actually jump in and have go. Swimming, riding a bike, playing a musical instrument... are all learned skills, reading and spelling are no different. Children need to pay attention when reading aloud and spelling with an adult to help them to focus on:

- making meaning,
- looking at the shape of the word (tall letters, tails, double letters/twins),
- number of sounds in a word compared to the number of actual letters written down
- any tricky sounds (which usually involve the vowels) eg: **are**,
- patterns and rhymes eg: **all**, **ball**, **call**, **fall**

It is a drip, drip, drip method that works best- a little bit regularly! As an educator/parent I fully empathise how challenging it is to find time and energy, especially after working all day with children and having a household to run and copious amounts of paperwork to do at bedtime- BUT... it was and still is 'sacred' time with my own adolescents. We still read together (information texts and literature with BIG life concepts such as war, politics, relationships...) My university lecturer read aloud to her teenage son while he washed the dishes nightly which opened up conversations about the world and his thoughts and many years later it is one of the most treasured things for both of them (although it was tedious at times!)

Morning Work at school: Is an ideal time to practice spelling a few 'sight' words (3-5) each time. Your child *'should'* have a file with a list or two in to practice reading and spelling (sometimes they tend to go missing). If you would like ideas how to practice these in

different ways eg: rainbow words, the gap game, graph paper word shapes, Look/Say/Cover/Write/Check, using the Lego word bricks ... so that children are not just copying them but are actually spelling from memory PLEASE see an educator. Spelling practice is another opportunity to help children practice correct letter formation (top to bottom, where to start certain letters like o, g, e, a, b, d...) and pencil grip. We have 'dolphin grips' to help children with the correct pencil grip- please see an educator.

Stuck on the toilet door, fridge or other visible places: high frequency words in highly visible places.

Practice in the car: Spell out certain words aloud and children find/read them on the list.

Side by side when reading out aloud together: (Mem Fox- 'Reading Magic'- we have copies of her book and DVD for families to borrow)- keep the lists handy and highlight a few words for your child to find and read out aloud when you pause and point to the word. It is recommended you only do this on a couple of pages or before starting to read, so that children do not get bored, become overwhelmed or lose interest. It is recommended children have a separate book that they know is theirs to attempt to read over the week, followed by a book of their choice for a parent to read. Frequent reading together is the most valuable literacy opportunity you can ever give your child, one-on-one uninterrupted time is priceless and can never be recreated at any school. Books are also great conversation starters and generate lots of questions and wonderings.

Some children will be able to read them on the list in order so plan to vary the order (that is why they are on a grid, you can practice a row or a column at a time or a random sequence), other children will very quickly and easily be able to read them in context (in a sentence in a book) yet will still need to revisit the spelling from time to time over the year. We encourage children to look closely at each word and try and photograph it with their eyes so when they shut their eyes they can 'see' it. Visualisation is a powerful way to learn and helps long term memory. If children just rely on copying a word it tends only to remain in their short term memory which is quickly overwhelmed when faced with the complex process of writing.

Please feel free to organise a Learning Team Debrief on a Wednesday afternoon if you wish to find out more on other processes that help children become literate and numerate. Or request for Leonie to organise a small group conversation about learning to be literate (Wednesday mornings). We are here to help and guide. Thanks- Leonie

