

READ

with Me!

Gitasudha Sridhar

Illustrated by Meha Vatsa



BlueRoseONE^{co}
Stories Matter

New Delhi • London

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

India | U.K.

Copyright © Gitasudha Sridhar 2023

All rights reserved by author. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein, the publisher assume no responsibility for any errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within.

BlueRose Publishers takes no responsibility for any damages, losses, or liabilities that may arise from the use or misuse of the information, products, or services provided in this publication.



For permissions requests or inquiries regarding this publication,
please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS
www.BlueRoseONE.com
info@blurosepublishers.com
+91 8882 898 898
+4407342408967

ISBN: 978-93-93385-63-5

First Edition: August 2023

‘Everything you say to your child is absorbed, catalogued and remembered’

- Maria Montessori



Table of contents

1. Introduction and foreword.....	6,7
2. What is language?.....	8
3. Learning Language.....	10
4. Words and the Brain.....	12
5. What is learning and what are the senses involved in the same?.....	13
6. Sensitive periods or windows of opportunity.....	14
7. Part 1-Preparation before reading.....	16-33
a) How does a child pick up oral language skills	
b)Role of Environment in language learning	
c)How can I help language stimulation at home	
d)Games to stimulate language	
e)Importance of non verbal conversations	
f)How reading should start in schools	
g)What are pre-reading activities	
i) How do pre-reading activities help	
i)Few Pre-reading activities	
j)Preparing the hand , mind and brain	
k)Practical Life and Sensorial activities	
l)What activities can I do at home	
m) More Pre reading activities	
n) Vocabulary Enrichment Activities	

Table of contents

8. Part 2---The Method.....	34-42
a) How to go about	
b) Understanding the English alphabet	
c) What are the different ways we teach phonics	
d) Senses used in learning phonics	
e) Overview of the method	
f) How does a child learn?	
9. The I-Spy Games.....	43-58
a) Understanding the I Spy game	
b) The 40 key sounds	
c) The I SPY Game stage 1	
d) The I Spy Game stage 2	
e) The I Spy Game stage 3	
10. The Sandpaper letters.....	59-69
a) Should the Sandpaper letters be used by all?.	
b) Understanding the Sandpaper letters	
c) Activities before working with Sandpaper letters	
d) Presentation of Sandpaper letters using 3 period lesson.....	66-69
11. The Moveable Alphabets.....	70-78
a) Transition from Sandpaper letters to Movable Alphabet	
b) Working with Movable alphabet	
c) Composing words using pictures	

Table of contents

12. Learning to blend two sounds.....	78
13. Practising 3 letter words and word lists.....	79
14. Transition from cursive to print.....	81
15. Moving forward from 3 letter words.....	82
16. Sight Words.....	83-84
17. Phonetically correct 4 letter words.....	85
18. Making words and sentences using pictures.....	86
19. Teaching letter names.....	87-88
20. Part 3- Blends and more.....	89-97
a) Introduction to Blends	
b) Understanding Blends	
c) Introduction to making Blends	
d) Looking at different types of blends	
e) Teaching Blends	
f) Vowel Blends continued	
g) Different vowel combinations (Reading folders)	
21. An overview-What we have done so far!!.....	98
22. Making reading fun!! A few activities that parents and teachers can do.....	99-103
23. Meet the author and Publisher.....	104

Hello dear teachers and parents !

I have always been fascinated in understanding how children learn. I also love understanding different cultures and especially how people of different cultures speak, as I believe culture influences languages. As an Early Childhood educator and Montessorian, I was lucky enough to see children from close to understand how they learn, and it became obvious that learning to read was not easy for many - either because of wrong instruction and methodology or the child coming from an impoverished learning environment, or cultural differences coming in the way. Teachers too continue to struggle to teach reading well. In my profession of training adults in the Montessori pedagogy, I visited the life of Helen Keller and studied about her, with the aim of making my adult students understand the need and importance of using one's senses in all learning.

It fascinated me to see how Helen Keller overcame her disabilities just to learn how to communicate and read, and further highlighted the importance of communication and reading. She paved the way for children with no sight, and today we see thousands of people with no sight being able to read.

Then the thought struck me- why do children with no disabilities find it difficult to read?

This made me study and understand what was needed to develop reading as an instructional method. On how one could do it right.

This book is one such of many ways to help a child learn to read, and not a claim to be the only one way.

Hope all of you enjoy it as much as learn from it, as much as I enjoyed making this book!

A big thank you to all who guided, encouraged and nudged me to do this book. A special mention -My teachers, friends and family!

All children come equipped to learn Language...

The question I love to ask parents is-

How did your child pick up the art of speaking at home? How did they pick up their Mother tongue ?

Did you have special classes? Or did they pick it up on their own?

Also, does your child only speak mother tongue or other languages too?

If yes, how did this happen?

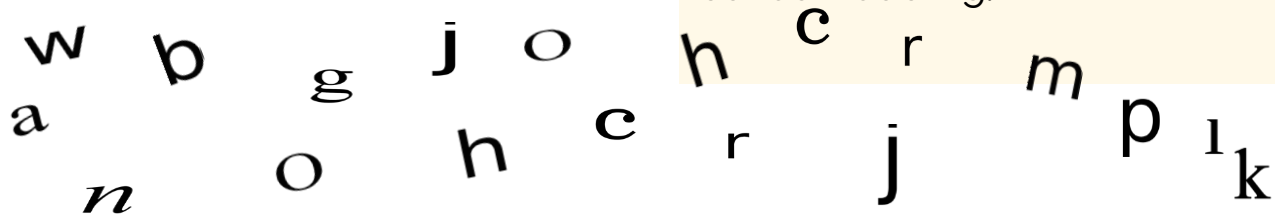


What is language?

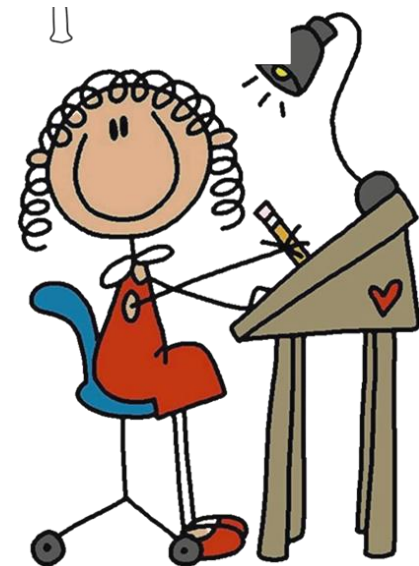
Language is that medium which is used to communicate. It is both verbal and non verbal. There are about 7000 languages spoken in the world today, but not every language has a written form or alphabet or script.

Reading is that skill of decoding symbols and attaching meaning to the same, the symbols being the letters of the alphabet. Reading can be that of any Language . It is the basis for future and further learning, and a very important skill for every child.

The letters of the alphabet have a particular shape or form called Symbol. A group of symbols or letters form a word. Each symbol or letter has a specific sound or method of pronunciation. Many symbols or letters put together is called a word. A string of words form a sentence. Decoding the words by using sounds and attaching meaning to it is called Reading.



Speaking, reading and writing-all different forms of language based communication.



Learning language

The first step in learning language is when you start communicating with your child right -when he/she/they is in the womb. Studies have shown how receptive and perceptive children are, from the womb itself.

There are two faces to Language- Expressive and Receptive, and they go hand in hand. What is needed is an environment enriched in language, positive and nurturing experiences; adults need to be the scaffolding to enable their child learn well.



Language should lead to reading. Reading is that part of communication that then needs to be taught, unlike spoken language. But spoken Language lays the foundation for good reading skills, thereby making it important.

Did you Know....?

The Human ear begins to function at the 3rd trimester.



Unborn infants can discriminate speech sounds from non-speech sounds.



They can make a well-defined distinction between their mother's voice and others.

How can babies learn the melodies and sounds of their mother tongue even before they are born? The answer is as simple as this: about 3 months before birth, while still in their mother's womb, babies start to hear. At that time, their ears are developed enough and start working. Usually, it will mostly be the mother's voice that reaches the baby's ears inside the womb, but other loud sounds or voices as well. Consequently, every day of the last few months before birth, the baby can hear people speaking - this is the first step in language learning!



- Reading Words
- Hearing Words
- Saying Words
- Thinking about Word

Words and the brain

Certain parts of the brain are responsible for understanding words and sentences. These brain areas are mainly located in two regions, in the left side of the brain, and are connected by nerves. Together, these brain regions and their connections form a network that provides the hardware for language in the brain. Without this brain network, we would not be able to talk or to understand what's being said.

Bibliography--From the article, the Brain and Language: How our brains communicate .
Author: Jen Brauer.
Published April 24, 2014.

What is learning and what are the senses involved in the same?

As we all know, learning is the ability to pick up either a skill or a concept. One can learn the laws of Physics, or learn to play the Tabla. But the senses and the type of Intelligence, used by a child ,are different in both.

Young children(ages 3-6), use as many senses as possible to learn, and facilitating this makes learning permanent and meaningful.

Formal reading is learnt from ages 3 to 5 and a half, but again there may be a variation in different children, depending on different factors like an enriching environment, interacting and dialoguing with the child, reading on a regular basis and so on. But in all , the senses play a major role for this age group.



Sensitive periods or Windows of opportunity.....

Children learn best at specific times in their lives. Very young children have specific times when their ability to learn is at a peak. This is because a particular part of their psyche and brain is very open to learning that specific concept or skill.

These are called 'Sensitive periods' or windows of opportunity. Children between the ages of two to six are in the Sensitive periods for many types of learning and growth- like movement, order , language etc.

The sensitive period for learning language is from prenatal stage till about 15 or 16 years of age, but that does not mean an adult cannot learn, it will just be more challenging.

Part 1

Preparation before reading

Age- 1 and above

For both parents and teachers

How does a child pick up Oral language skills ?



Children learn by **listening** and then making an **association** with the same. All learning happens this way, but this is very specific to oral language learning!

We can see that not just children, but animals too can understand what we say! This is because of the **tone** , **Intonation** and the **association** with a certain sentence or word.

Having good oral Language skills will help your child grasp the ability to read faster and better.

Car in hand or in a book → car on road!!
(association)

Role of Environment in Language learning.

(Age - from womb to as long as possible!)

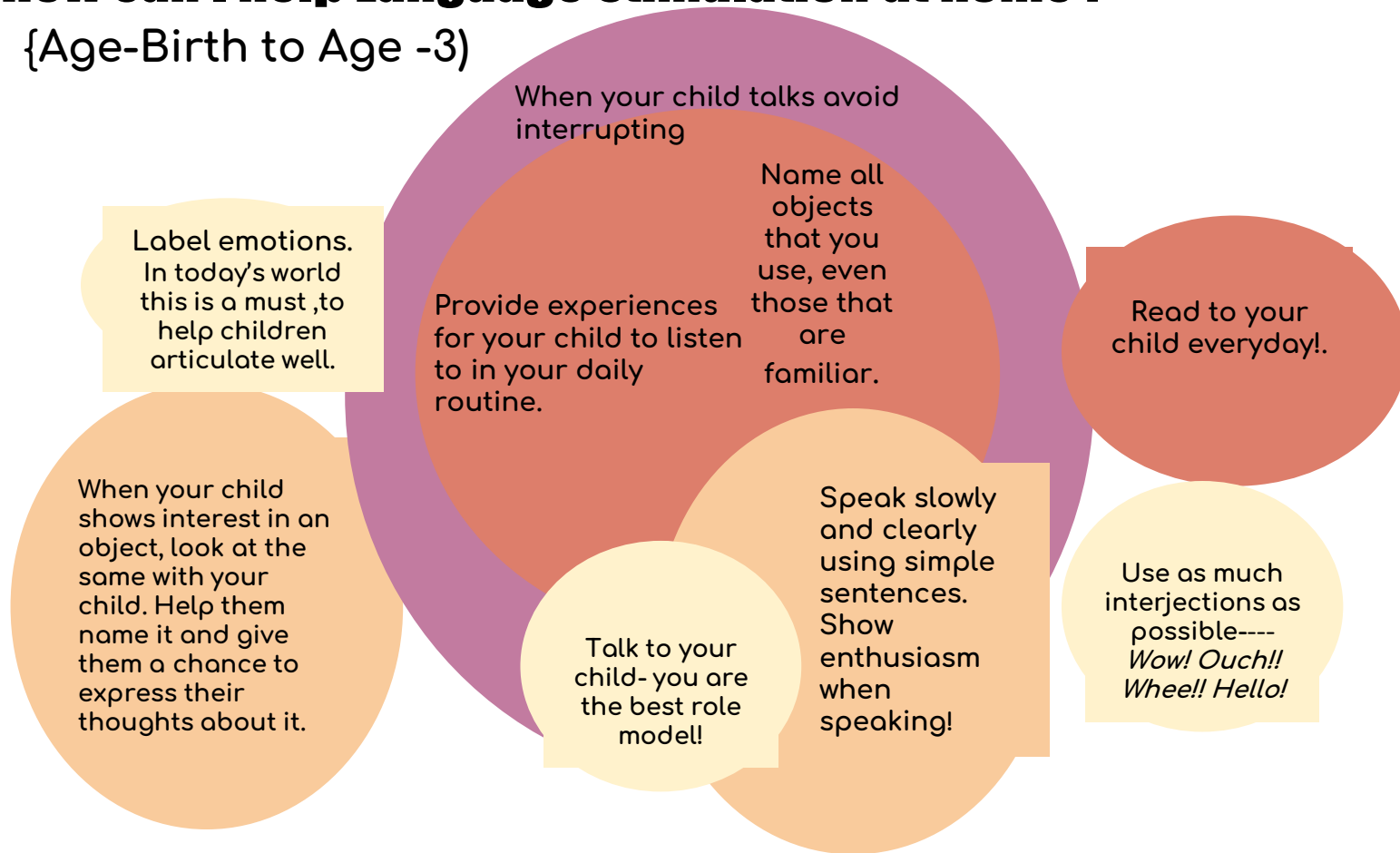
Young children always learn from what they are naturally drawn to. So in every type of learning the Environment plays a huge role. **The environment, whether home or school should be rich in written and spoken language.**

What also plays a role is in what we offer the child ; some learning may be child initiated and child directed, some may be presented by a teacher or adult.

TIP - Engage your child in as much meaningful conversation as possible!! Pay attention to how you speak and learn to listen too!

How can I help Language stimulation at home ?

{Age-Birth to Age -3}



Games to stimulate Language

Naming your Activity

'This is the way I water plants. Would you like to help me?'

Naming the Emotion

'It makes me happy to see you put your toys away.'
'I feel sad when you cry.'

Describing things

'This white bowl looks bigger than the red bowl.'
'Can you bring me the book that is next to you?'

Showing interest in things

'I see that you really enjoy eating this fruit. It is called a banana and is yellow in colour.'

Using exclamations

'Wow! That is a beautiful painting!'

Games that stimulate language....

Naming the object by describing its use- ' I use this to brush my teeth, what is it called? But what do I use to clean my shoes? '

'How was your day?
Mine was exciting! '

' Can you end this story in another way? '

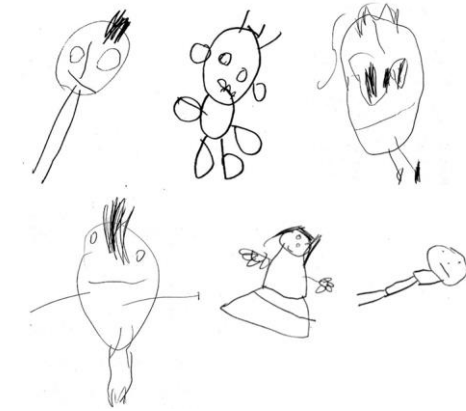
Pictionary

'I will name something, you give another name beginning with the ending sound.' Eg. I say 'cat', child will say 'tap'.

Importance of non verbal conversations!

Learning of any kind is always interlinked with good experiences and memories. Sometimes, a nod, a smile, an acknowledgement, a clap, and most importantly acting upon their request always helps encourage a child.

Art plays an important role and is many times not encouraged. Allowing your child to display or draw their thoughts in early stages, and then helping them articulate or describe what they have built or drawn is a huge step forward in encouraging them to speak.



How should reading start in schools? (ages 2 to 6)



Circle time

Without doubt, we should first start with conversations and dialoguing that should be given importance to, before any formal reading lessons are begun.

So, where does it all begin? What should schools and teachers do before starting with reading instruction?

They should prepare the child for it in other ways..... That's what a true enriched learning environment must do-Montessori environment or non Montessori.

What are pre reading activities?

Preparing the mind, the hand or the body is very important before one embarks on learning a skill or concept. Unfortunately this very common sense objective is lost or forgotten in our urgency as adults to make children learn.

We forget to sow the seeds but want to reap immediately!!

Over the years, I have found teachers and parents 'teach' reading by directly going to letters, sounds and words. But what they forget is to help the child prepare for the same indirectly. This preparation is by doing pre reading activities with children.

How do pre reading activities and work done in other areas help?

When it comes to a skill such as reading, we must remember that it is not a mere skill but a combination of **skill with cognition**. Hence, preparing the mind, the brain and the eye is a must .

Activities that are done in lieu of such preparation are called Pre reading activities.

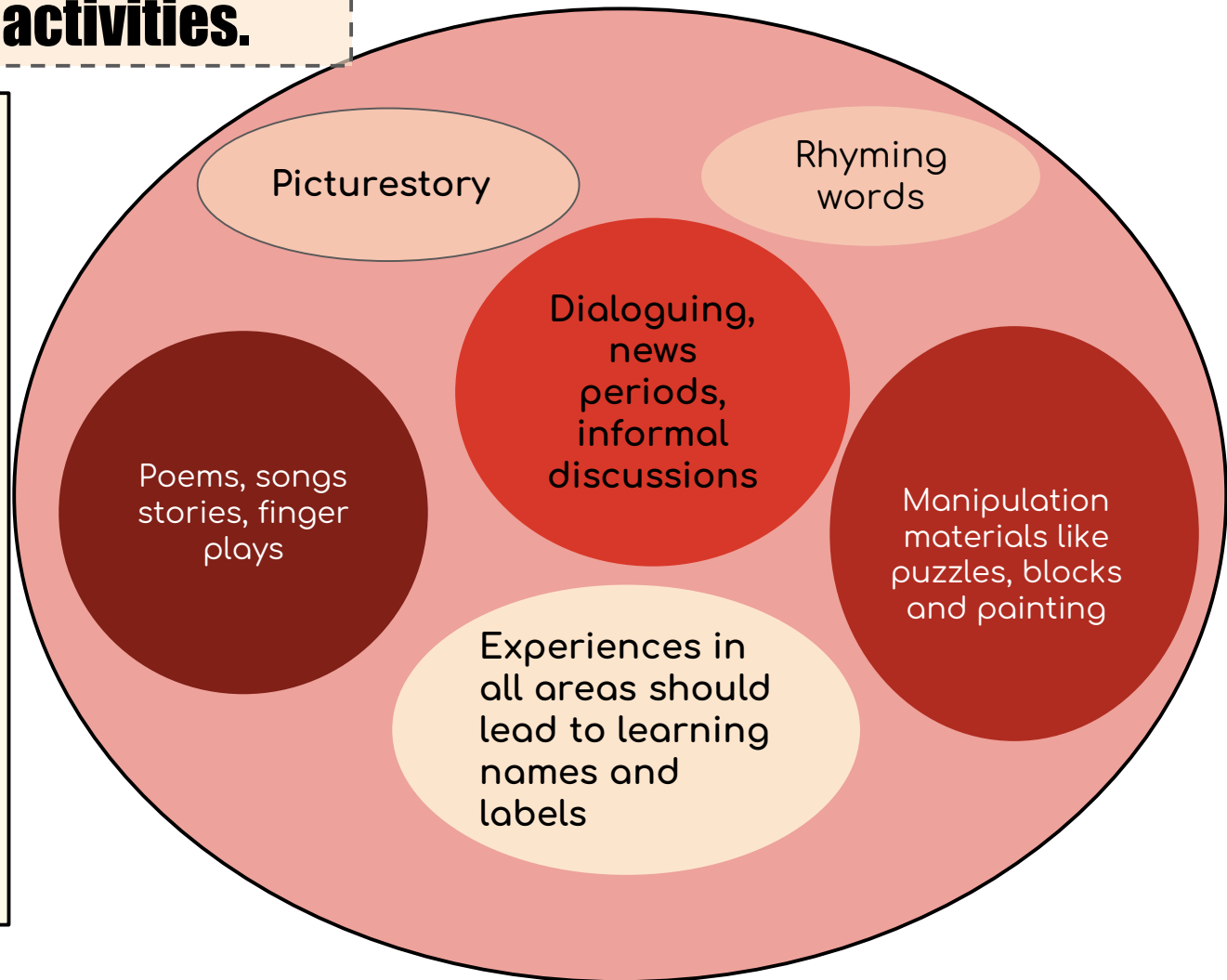
These are activities that help a child learn, recognise and associate 'things' in the environment, associate with the same in the outer world. They also help the child learn to understand 'similarities' and differences in objects , thereby helping them do the same when looking at the letters in a word.

These activities , if done right, also help train the brain to move from a left to right and top to bottom movement.

Pre reading activities.

How should reading start in schools?(age 2 to 6)

Most teachers or adults start with formal reading training directly, which is not the way to go about. One should always have informal activities first , like those mentioned.



Preparing mind, hand and brain.....

The Montessori pedagogy gives a lot of importance to preparing the child for reading and writing. This kind of preparation is the key, and helps the child transition smoothly. Let us take a look at how some activities can be done to help the child with reading .

Sequence all activities from left to right.

Counting activities from left to right

Practical Life activities from left to right

Sensorial sequencing from left to right

Picture or board reading from left to right

These are just a few, but you got the idea!

What are Practical Life and Sensorial activities.....

Practical Life activities are those that include daily life activities like pouring water or grains, cutting, transferring things etc.

Sensorial activities are those that make a child focus on using their senses in completing the activity.

As much as possible it is good to have activities that start from the top left hand corner, moving to the right, and also move top to bottom. How does this help? By training the eyes and brain to move and function as one would need to do to read.

What activities can I do at home ? (Practical Life and Sensorial)

- ★ I can help wipe a table, moving top to bottom left to right.
- ★ I can fold towels, moving from left to right
- ★ I can follow all the steps required for washing my hands
- ★ I can help wipe lemons and tomatoes using a soft cloth, after it is washed
- ★ I can help water plants using bucket and mug or a hose
- ★ I can help organise books from top to bottom.

Teach me names.....
I am 'wiping' the 'table'
See how I 'wash' my
hands!
I am 'watering' plants!
This book is 'bigger'
than this!

More pre reading activities!!

Rhyming games.

Expressive
storytelling

Recognition of
colours and
colour names

Recognition
of body
parts.

Finding things in
the environment
that match with
knowledge of
colours and
shapes .

Being able
to group
things
according to
use.

Being able to
group things
according to
similarities
and
differences

Recognition
of geometric
shapes in
the
environmen.

Vocabulary Enrichment Activities..

It is very important to help a child develop the right Vocabulary. This not only helps develop better reading skills, but also helps the child develop a link with themselves and the environment, thereby making learning in all areas easy.

One simple activity for 2 -4 year children is the name lesson.

Choose some simple objects , put them in a tray or basket, and take it to a mat or table. Remove each one, and name as you remove.

Your child will start making a connection with the object in being able to recognise it as 'something'. Eg. if I use a basket of small animal objects, my child will soon recognise cow, cat. dog, horse etc. Or vegetables, or Fruits.



Part 2

The Method



How to go about.....

There are different ways that one can teach a child how to read. But what I have found most efficient and is a part of Montessori Methodology, is the **Phonics** method. Even schools that are non Montessori follow the same. But along with the phonics method, we must add Whole Language activities, memorisation of Sight words etc. We must also remember to continue to give the child an environment enriched in language, most of which has been covered in Part 1.

Understanding the English alphabet..

The English Alphabet has 26 letters , divided into vowels and consonants.

Vowels are the letters a, e, i, o,u.
There are 5 vowels.
They can have a short sound or a long sound. They can be used in combination of two or as a single letter.
Eg cat- 'a' is a short sound.
Loop-'oo is the long sound.

Consonants are the other 21 letters of the alphabet. They can be used individually to create a single sound, or two consonants can be put together to create a different or new sound.

What are the different ways we teach Phonics?

The Phonics method is one where we use the 'sounds' to teach children how to read. But we must understand that the English Language is not a logical one, and cannot be learnt with one method only. We have to use various other learning methods in combination with Phonics. *Why?* Because this makes it easier for the child.

But we must remember *when to do what*, and how to intersperse all. We need to bring in the connection , including also *experiences and association*.

Teaching Phonics contd.....

It is important to include...

- I spy games
- Vocabulary enrichment
- Reading of books
- Whole Language activities.

Along with the sandpaper letters.

This is because the sandpaper letters are also used to teach how to write the letters.

I spy games are normally done in stages and usually should be done with the child as an initial introduction to Language, **much before the presentation of sandpaper letters**. Of course, once we start the I Spy games, we can start with a few sandpaper letters side by side.

All of the above need to be given to the child regularly and in rotation.

The senses used to learn phonics

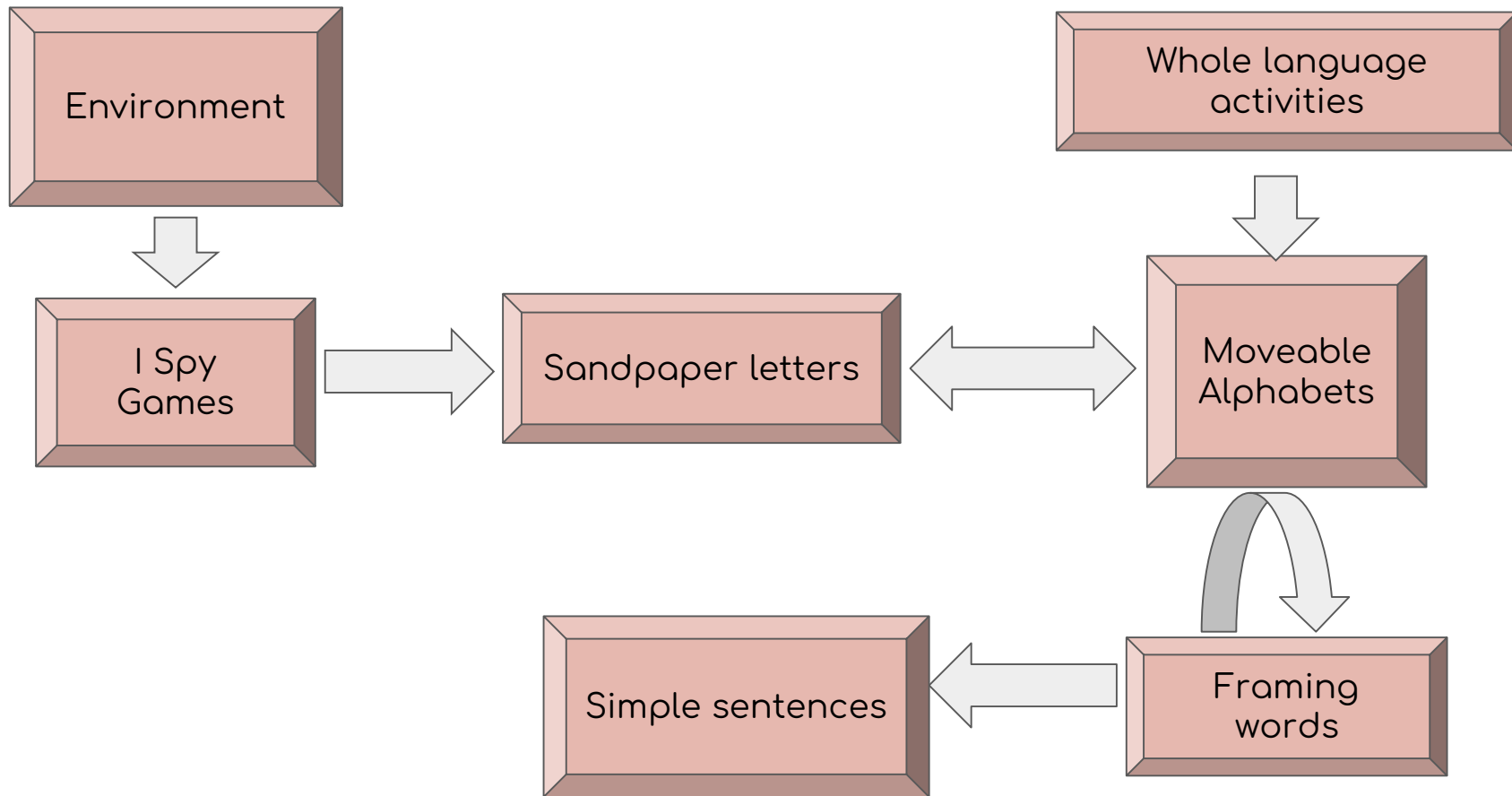
When Montessori developed her methodology , she first observed the children and then brought in the way or methodShe saw what a child needed and how a child worked and brought in what was needed.

She developed among other things, the Sandpaper letters , the Moveable alphabets , and the Metal insets as key material to teach a child how to read , learn language and write the letters.

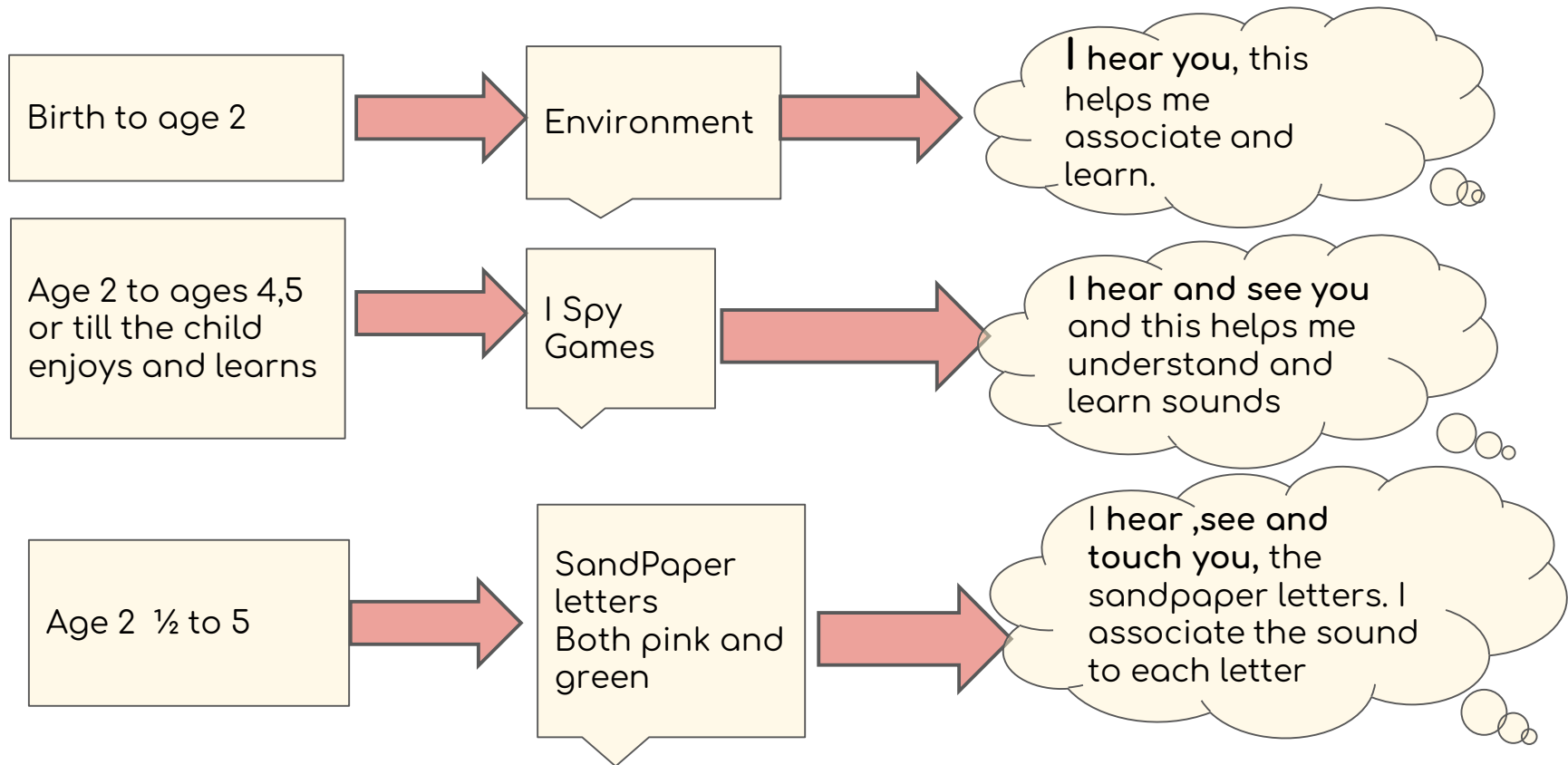
The sandpaper letters which are used to teach the sounds make use of the visual, auditory and thematic senses. Sight, sound and touch.



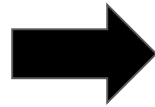
The Method-Part 2



How does a child learn?

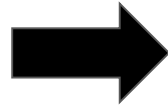


Moveable
alphabets



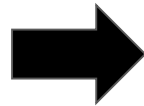
I connect you with sounds and build words. I can also make sentences . I use you till I start writing the same.

Sight
words



I see you regularly in sentences, and try to remember the same when I read

Whole
Language



I connect you with what you stand for, and I remember your name by looking at shape, colour and size.

The I SPY GAMES



What is the I Spy game?

(age 2 and above)

It is an oral language activity that helps a child make connections and associations with a sound and object. This is a more specific form of dialoguing and experience.

It's main purpose is to help the child focus or bring to the child's attention the individual sounds that make up a word.

The I Spy Game is mainly auditory in nature, done with a few visual aids like objects and pictures. But for the child it is the auditory connection that matters.

Once the I SPY Game is in flow, introducing the sounds in a formal way brings in some sort of sense and connection for the child, thus helping the child see Language in the World around them.

What is needed for the I Spy game ?














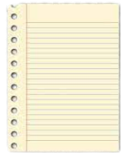


















First, the understanding that it is the sound that is used in reading and not the letter name .

Second, a few objects , from in and around the environment.

Third, knowledge and accurate pronunciation of the sounds. The biggest hurdle is learning how to pronounce each sound. Learning to do it right is the first important step as it lays the foundation for further reading and pronunciation.

There are 26 letters of the alphabet.

















Each letter has a sound corresponding to it. But there are 40 key sounds, as there are both single sounds and double letter sounds.

<p>a as in apple</p>  	<p>e as in egg</p>  	<p>i as in igloo</p>  	<p>m as in jam</p>  
<p>b as in tub</p>  	<p>f as in fan</p>  	<p>j as in page</p>  	<p>n as in sun</p>  
<p>c as in picnic</p>  	<p>g as in jug</p>  	<p>k as in stick</p>  	<p>o as in octopus</p>  
<p>d as in sand</p>  	<p>h as in hat</p>  	<p>l as in lamp</p>  	<p>p as in drop</p>  

<p>r as in rabbit</p>  	<p>u as in umbrella</p>  	<p>x as in six</p>  
<p>s as in bus</p>  	<p>v as in glove</p>  	<p>y as in yolk</p>  
<p>t as in rabbit</p>  	<p>w as in watch</p>  	<p>z as in buzz</p>  

40 key sounds contd....

These can be given later according to level of child.

<p>or as in stork</p> 	<p>ng as in king</p> 	<p>qu as in squirrel</p> 	<p>ow as in cow</p> 
<p>ai as in stain</p> 	<p>oa as in coat</p> 	<p>th as in thorn</p> 	<p>ar as in dark</p> 
<p>ee as in green</p> 	<p>oo as in moon</p> 	<p>sh as in brush</p> 	<p>er as in fern</p> 
<p>ie as in magpie</p> 	<p>ch as in pinch</p> 	<p>oi as in point/toy</p> 	<p>qu as in question mark</p> 

Difference between sounds and letters

Let us remember, that there is a difference in the sounds and letters in each word. I think everyone has understood that by now.

Let us also remember that any word has more than one sound. Some words have a few sounds , some ,many. So when we say use words with 3 sounds only, we must remember that we are not talking of the number of letters but how many 'sounds' we hear.

Eg. Bucket- here we hear 3 sounds- buh, ck, et. but 6 letters

Car- 3 sounds,3 letters .

The I SPY Game contd

Common version used in classrooms....

The I Spy Game has three stages, going from Concrete to Abstract. Each stage has presentations. The commonly used phrase for all stages is "I Spy with my little eye....."

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

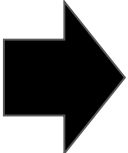
4 presentations

3 presentations

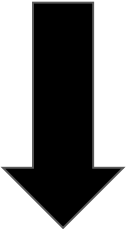
2 presentations

I spy Game contd.....

Stage 1



4 presentations



Beginning sound



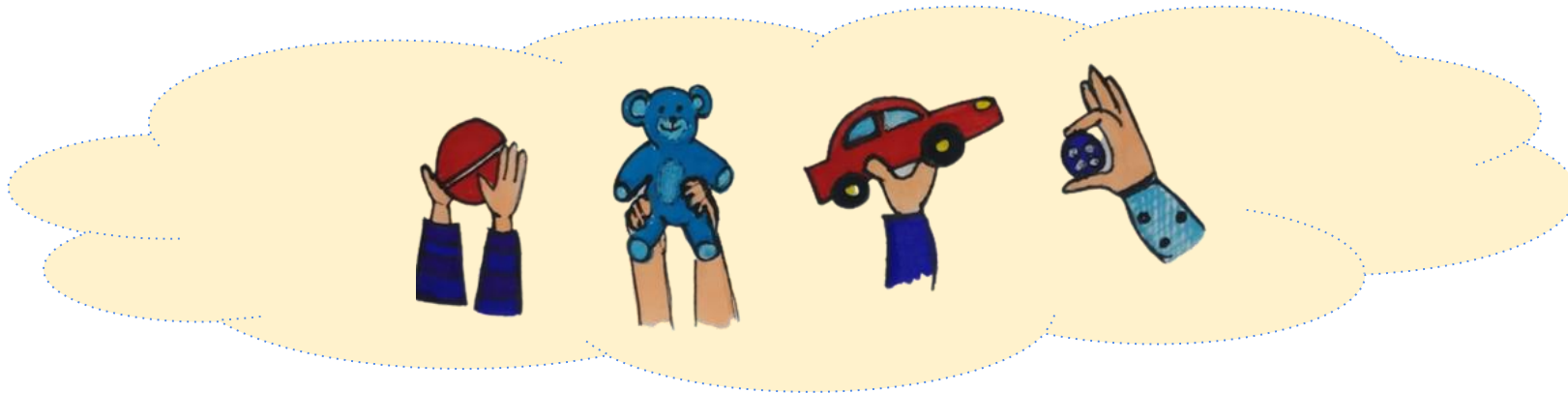
- 1. Taking a cue from what your child brings or from the basket of objects the teacher brings. Initially let the teacher/adult choose an object.
- 2. Taking cues from what your child is wearing.
- 3. Taking cue from the immediate environment like the room.

I Spy Game -stage 1

The common sentence for all presentations are:
'I Spy with my little eye, something....."

To pronounce the sound correctly, please refer to the chart on pages 45-47

Presentation 1: Once the children are gathered around, each with one small object in their hand, say- I Spy with my little eye, something in Akila's hand that begins with the sound 'b' . Akila answers 'button.' Here, the children would have each brought one object with them. Repeat the above sentence with each child. We are bringing to the child's notice- the **beginning sound**. We can also use a **basket of objects that the teacher brings**.



Stage 1 contd.....

Presentation 2: 'I Spy with my little eye something that Nikil is wearing and begins with 's"- socks. Here you are extending the game to include pieces of the child's clothing. Can repeat any number of times.

Presentation 3: Increase the level of difficulty by bring two objects to the table or work mat/space. But make sure both objects have a different beginning sound.eg, hat and cup. Then say," I Spy with my little eye something that begins with 'h' . Child says hat. Now repeat for cup , and change the beginning sound.

Presentation 4: Now extend the area of choice to include the whole room. 'I spy with my little eye something in the room that begins with f" Child will say 'fan.'

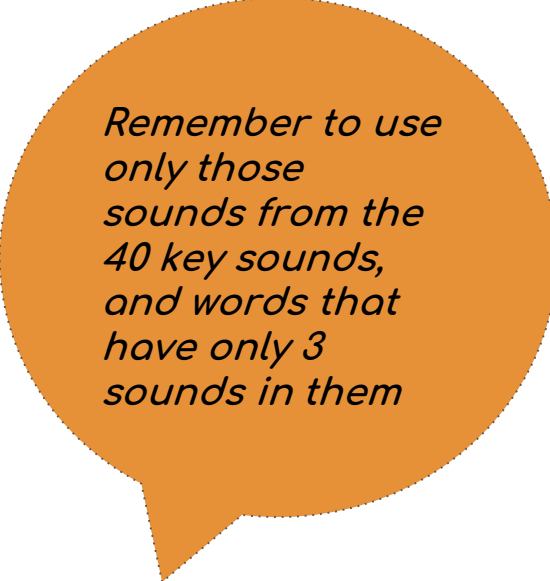
Stage 2 -I Spy Game continued.

Presentation 1- Pick two objects with the same beginning sound, BUT different ending sounds. Like cow and cat.

I spy with my little Eye something that begins with 'c' but ends with 'ow'(cow) or 't (cat).

Continue but remember to try and use only those sounds from the 40 key sounds.

Extend slowly to choosing from environment. Then you can use objects that also have different beginning sounds. -like light and fan.



Remember to use only those sounds from the 40 key sounds, and words that have only 3 sounds in them

I Spy Game

Presentation 2- Once the child is familiar with the beginning and ending sounds, we can now focus on the middle sound.

Use simple 3 letter words. Eg cat. Showing the picture of a cat, say, 'I Spy with my little eye, something that begins with 'c' and ends with 't', Child will respond 'cat'. Adult repeats the word 'cat'.

'What sound does cat begin with?'c'

'What sound does 'cat' end with? t'

Now what sound do we hear in the middle? Say the word slowly so child can identify sound. Child will say 'a' .

I spy with my little eye



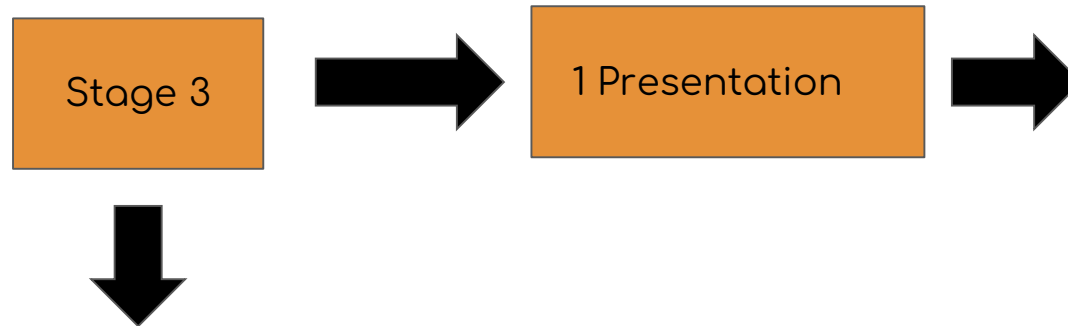
Something that begins with "c"

Something that ends with "t"

"cat"

What sound do you hear in the middle when we say ..c...a...t..?

I Spy Game - Stage 3



Remember, we are interested only in listening to the sound, and not in writing .
This entire exercise is an oral activity.

This stage is more abstract, and no objects are used.

Use any word with 3 sounds , using the 40 key sounds .

Review with child, all the sounds. Child can imagine the object with you too! Or initially use a picture.

Start with beginning sound, then ending sound and lastly middle sound .

Difference between sounds and letters

Let us remember, that there is a difference in the sounds and letters in each word. I think everyone has understood that by now.

Let us also remember that any word has more than one sound. Some words have a few sounds , some ,many. So when we say use words with 3 sounds only, we must remember that we are not talking of the number of letters but how many 'sounds' we hear.

Eg. Bucket- here we hear 3 sounds- buh, ck, et. but 6 letters

Car- 3 sounds,3 letters .

Remember.....

Facts About The I SPY Game

- ❑ It has to be done before moving onto Sandpaper letters.
- ❑ It is to make children aware of sounds they use in speech!
- ❑ The adult often initiates the activity and is present throughout. But if it is made enjoyable enough, and it should , you will find children trying this on their own !!
- ❑ We must continue with other parallel vocabulary activities when doing this.

**The
Sand Paper
Letters**



Should the Sandpaper letters be taught by all?

Coming to the Sandpaper letters- two things I would like to bring up.

It should be presented only when one has trained in the method and the adult has learned to do it well. And if so, it cannot be done in isolation at home. This a fundamental lesson and lays the foundation for basic language learning and paves the way how language is learnt. And why should it not be done in isolation? Because it is connected with other language activities and the environment. So presenting it outside may not be as effective.

And hence, what is being shared here, is basic information for parents, but a guide for teachers to use in classrooms. Parents can use it to understand where their child is, and to understand better what their child's teacher is saying or writes in their reports.

For those of you are trained, this is a good way to brush up their understanding and understand where your child is.

What are Sandpaper letters?

They are the letters of the alphabet (lower case script) cut out and each mounted on a separate piece of wood. The consonants are mounted on blue wood and the vowels on pink. The direct purpose of the sandpaper letters is to teach the child the sounds of the alphabet by means of muscular and visual memory.

It also helps in teaching the child how to write the letter of the alphabet.

Of course , the cursive script is much preferred because it is easier for the child to move his hand in a flow.

The pink and the blue are single sounds.



The Sandpaper Letters contd...

There are also the green sandpaper letters, which have double letters/ sounds mounted on them

So, for both the double letters and the single letters, it is best to refer to the 40 key sound list, which has been shared on page---

This is also called Phonogram sandpaper letters.



Teacher preparation for presenting sandpaper letters

The teacher, guide, or directress should

- Explore the sounds in the language that child is functioning, or the language the child is going to learn
- Have thorough knowledge of the language .
- Have the ability to reproduce the sound correctly.
- Develop vocabulary or use the right language.
- Memorise the sounds and symbols.
- Have adequate practise.
- Be able to help the child connect it with the environment - this is the key to enrichment.

What should a child work with before working with sandpaper letters?

Working with activities that promote left to right movement in both the Practical life and Sensorial area.

Regular Practise of the I Spy Game, connecting with objects in the real world and class that help recognise the beginning, ending and middle sounds

Working with pre reading activities like object and picture matching, Picture story, classified cards and other vocabulary enhancement activities.

- All of the above are on pages 23 to 30, and 40 to 52.

How do I present the SandPaper letters?

Choose 2 or 3 sandpaper letters.

Place them face down on top right side of table /chowki

Bring one down to centre, show child how to trace, and say sound aloud

Do the same with the other two. Then do the three period lesson. Once child remembers, give more practice with the same by connecting to objects around that begin with that sound. Mark on tracking sheet , and move on to the next set.

The 3 period lesson..

This is a very effective way to teach concepts like colour names, sounds, numbers and shapes etc. we can introduce 2 or 3 concepts at a time.

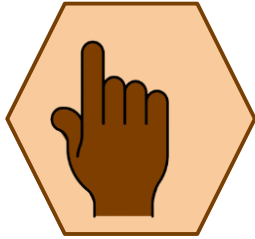
Montessori has always laid a lot of emphasis on making the learning experience very concrete , so your child will remember the concept better. Connecting the learning with an experience strengthens the memory and it goes into long term memory .

This concept of 3 period lesson was adapted by her from the work of Seguin and Itard.

Period 1
Name

Period 2
Recognise

Period 3
Recall

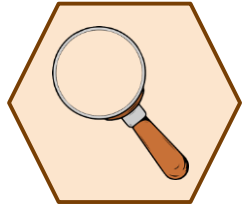


Name

The 3 period lesson continued...

Name- you name the object or concept. It could be name of animal , fruit, vegetable; colour name or number; shape etc Eg. This is an apple., this is an orange Or this is 'c' , this is 'd'





Recognise

The 3 period lesson contd.....

Recognise- This is the longest and most interactive. Have the child act using the object or colour or number. Give the following instructions....Eg. Pick up the apple. Place the apple on your apple, Give the apple to your friend, take the apple back from your friend. Remember to use the name (in this case apple) each time.

Same using the orange.

This will help the child make a connection, as there is movement, connect and involvement with that object or concept.



Can you keep the apple on the mat

Can you hide the apple under the mat





Recall

The 3 period lesson contd.....

Recall- This is to be done 24 hours later . You will show or point to the object or concept that the child has worked with in the first two periods, and then ask “ What is this?” If the child answers correctly, you can move onto newer concepts. If not you will have to repeat periods two and three.

Important: Always start period two with what you last did in period one.

What is this?

This is an apple



The Moveable alphabets.



abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



The Moveable alphabets.

For a child between the ages of 2 to 6, movement plays an important and integral part . It helps strengthen the cognitive process. Hence quite a few of the Montessori material is designed to encourage movement in the classroom.

One such material is the Moveable alphabet. It is a wooden box with 26 compartments, and each compartment has at least 8 wooden cutouts of the letters. What is it used for and how does it help?

The child chooses specific letters , and puts it together to make a word. By this, we understand that the child has moved on to a more concrete stage in reading, choosing letters that represent a sound, and slowly learning to blend the letters to make words. Here, reading and learning to write too go hand in hand, as by now the child would have also learnt to form and write letters.

Moving forward-the next stage- composing words using the Movable alphabets

We are now going to presume that your child has learnt and is confident of recognising the sounds , and can say the sound connected with each letter. Your child is now ready to move to the next phase , which is to the visual and association phase, and ready to use a material called the Moveable alphabets. What is the Moveable Alphabet box? Or MA as it is commonly called?

The moveable alphabet is a box of individual letters that have been cut out so the child can use them to compose words. Typically the consonants are pink or red and the vowels are blue.

The moveable alphabets prepare children for reading, writing and spelling. It helps children to symbolize their own thoughts and begin to write creatively. It gives confidence to the young reader.

Transition from Sandpaper letters to Moveable Alphabet.

Step 1:

Have the child match each letter of the sandpaper letter to the letters of the Moveable alphabet. This is called transition from Sandpaper letters to Moveable alphabets.



Step 2:

Check if child can recognise and remember sounds , and can match sound to letter.
Eg. If you say bring me 'e' -aeh(as in egg) the child will bring you the letter 'e'.

Working with the Moveable Alphabet.....

Choose picture card of a three letter word, eg cat.

Ask child to recognise and name picture.
'This is a cat.'

What do you hear in the beginning when we say "cat"?
Child should say 'c'

Have child fetch the letter 'c' from the Moveable alphabet box, and place it next to the picture card.

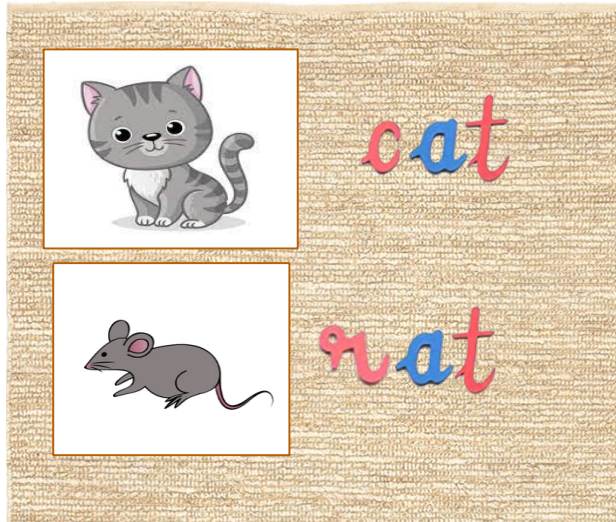
Have the child do this for a series of pictures, till he, she or they is confident.

The same can be done for **ending** sound. When I say 'cat', what sound can you hear in the end?

Once your child is confident with beginning and ending sounds, we then make him/her/them aware of the middle sound.

In this way, the child can compose the entire 3 letter word.-
cat.

Composing words using pictures



Composing words using pictures

Once your child gets to this stage of reading, a number of activities are needed to give him/her or them the experience needed. One such activity which is popular in classrooms is composing words using pictures. Initially we start with 3 letter words. We can use similar pictures that we used to learn about beginning sound, ending sound etc.

Your child will have to place the pictures, one at a time , along the length of a mat and then bring the corresponding letters from the Moveable alphabet to form the word. This activity is good in trying to analyse the sounds, as child has to break down the word .

What is important is that the teacher must have the child recognise the pictures and name it once before starting work. This removes ambiguity into what the word or picture is. Most teachers do not do that which can cause confusion. Also, these pictures have to be changed regularly as children can memorise the same.

Learning to blend two sounds.....

Why am I suggesting that we first introduce 3 letter words , and then focus of blending 2 letters?

Children understand the concept of reading when the meaning of what they are reading is understood. So most 3 letter words are names of objects , animals , etc that children can have a context to. With this they also understand the beginning, ending and middle sounds.

Now , having the child understand that putting sounds together and saying it aloud as one word, is reading, is the next step!

Blending 2 sounds to make it a word.....

Let us learn how to blend 'a' and 't' together to read the word 'at'

Place the letter 'a' on the left side of either mat or child sized table.

Then place the letter 't' on the right edge .

Place your fingers first under letter 'a' and say the sound aloud 'aaa'

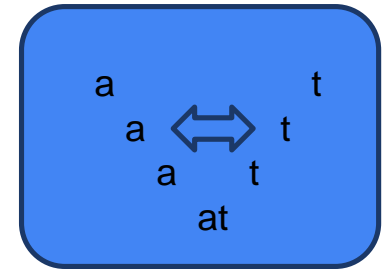
Then place your fingers under 't' and say the sound 'tuh'

Now start bringing the letters towards the centre, then place your finger under 'a' and move to 't' so we will be saying- 'aaaa' 't'

Say it faster , and move letters closer till a is next to 't'

Then have the child say 'at' (when the child is saying 'at', the letters are close to each other)

The moving of letter 'a' closer and closer to 't' will help the child understand how the two sounds have to connect.



Practising 3 letter words

Once your child is learning to put letters together and blend and read the same, constant practise of the same is needed. One needs a lot of patience at this time. Some amount of consistency and repetition is needed. Hence we will work with word families here.

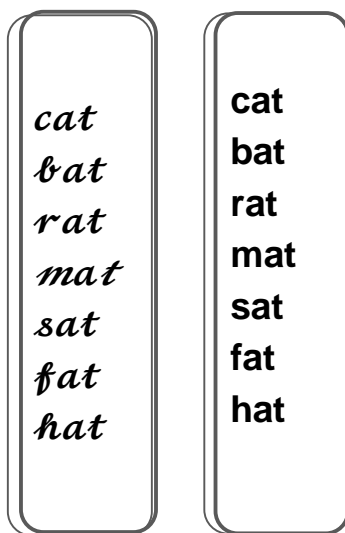
Word families are words that have the same ending. Eg 'at' words. The words cat, mat, bat, sat , lat , bat , fat, rat all have the same ending. They belong to the 'at' family.

There are two ways to do this-using reading lists and/or oral dictation. /or child giving the words.

Say the 3 letter word aloud , eg rat. Have child fetch the correct letters. Have child place the letters on the mat or on table. Then have the child read the word aloud. Next say the word 'mat'. Ask child what has changed, and when child says this word now begins with 'm', have child replace the 'r' with 'm'. The 'a' and 't' stays constant. Only beginning sound/letter has changed. Do the same with at least 10 more words. You can have one or two words that do not have meaning . eg. lat. The idea is to get reading.

Moving to word lists

Now that your child has got the concept of reading 3 letter words, we can introduce word lists.



It is important for adults/ teachers to keep in mind that lists should be read aloud even by teachers to help children see and hear how we read. Placing finger under the words is a good way to help your child focus, especially in the beginning.

Transition from cursive to print.

Most schools in India, especially Montessori schools , introduce the child to the cursive font. A font is a style of writing used. But in reality the world around us is in print. If as a school you have introduced cursive in the beginning, this is the time to introduce print letters. This is very important because in the world around us, it is print which is the most commonly used.

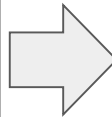
Does teaching cursive help? How does it help? Or should we stick just to print ?

Teaching cursive not only helps with writing and better brain development, most importantly it helps a child understand letters that are not print, especially if something is handwritten. It increases the scope of reading material.

Moving forward from 3 letter words.....

As I see my child getting proficient with 3 letter words, the following is the way to go forward...

Introduce your child to simple sentences with 3 letter words. Before that just talk about what a sentence is. This can be done as a group activity. This can be done when reading too.



Cat on mat



Hat on cat

Cat on mat
Hat on cat
Cat on dog

Going forward....Sight words.

Once your child is comfortable with 3 letter word sentences, introduce what is called Sight words or puzzle words . sight words are words that do not follow any phonetic rule. E.g. the , two, etc. And also those words that are commonly used, which the child can memorise. The list can be made and kept for regular reading, and practiced at home too. When this is done, we can introduce sentences with the same.

The cat is on the mat

Sight word list

Here are a few common sight words....(these are just a few. They can be found on the net too.)

One
Two
Would
All
About

This
That
Then
There

End
Ear
Find
Was

Look
Next
Stand
Under

Shall
Should
such
read

Moving on.....

We will now introduce phonetically correct 4 letter words.

Let us
take
the
word
'pond'

Ask your child....'What are the sounds you hear when I say 'pond'"
p,o, n,d.... When I put it together I hear 'pond '

Have child place finger under word when saying it aloud. Most times it is very beneficial to have a picture too. Make lists of phonetically correct 4 letter words for regular practise .

Make sentences that your child can read!!
Have your child also say sentences and he /she /they can construct using the moveable alphabet.

Working with words and sentences using pictures.....

There are many aids like simple books that are available to practice reading



The duck is in the pond.

Using pictures with labels for phonetically correct 4 letter words and then moving onto books also helps. Also, Have your child say the sentence orally and then build the words using the Moveable alphabets. Reading it after building is reinforcing reading .

Teaching letter names

While in the process of teaching your child to read, this is also a good time to introduce letter names. It is good to hold onto letter names until your child is comfortable with reading, just to avoid confusion.

What are letter names? They are the original names of the letters of the alphabet . A transition activity using the Moveable alphabet , where you can say, this is MR. A, remember 'a' says aaaaa(like in apple) , and so on.

This is also a good time to teach the upper case or capital letters .

Though both of the above can be introduced earlier too, depending on what stage your child is with reading , and how quickly your child reads .

Teaching letter names

While in the process of teaching your child to read, this is also a good time to introduce letter names. It is good to hold onto letter names until your child is comfortable with reading, just to avoid confusion.

What are letter names? They are the original names of the letters of the alphabet. A transition activity using the Moveable alphabet , where you can say, this is MR. A, remember 'a' says aaaaa(like in apple) , and so on.

This is also a good time to teach the upper case or capital letters .

Though both of the above can be introduced earlier too, depending on what stage your child is with reading , and how quickly your child reads .

Part 3- Blends

Taking it further with blends.

The next set of pages are to be used and the activities to be presented to children only after they have got a good grasp on basic reading skills.

Remember, the more you read, the better their reading skills.

Introduction to blends.....

Before we go further, let us learn a few more facts about the English Language. We already know that there are 26 letters of the alphabet. They are divided into consonants and vowels.

Consonants

b, c, d, f, g, h, j,
k, l, m, n, p, q, r,
s, t, v, w, x, y, z.

Vowels

a, e, i, o, u,
and
Sometimes
y
(pony, my,
lady)

Let us remember---Most consonants are pronounced only in one way. When we introduce the Sandpaper letters, we introduce only one sound. Blends are introduced only later after the child has mastered the initial pronunciation and is reading words using these sounds.

Understanding blends better

Important points:

Sometimes consonants are themselves sounded out differently or pronounced differently as in the following. The original sound changes when it is followed by certain letters . E.g.

c (as in cat)
changes to **soft c**
when it is before a
e, i , y. As in **ceiling**.

g (as in gob) changes
to **soft g** when it is
before l, e, y. As in
gypsy.

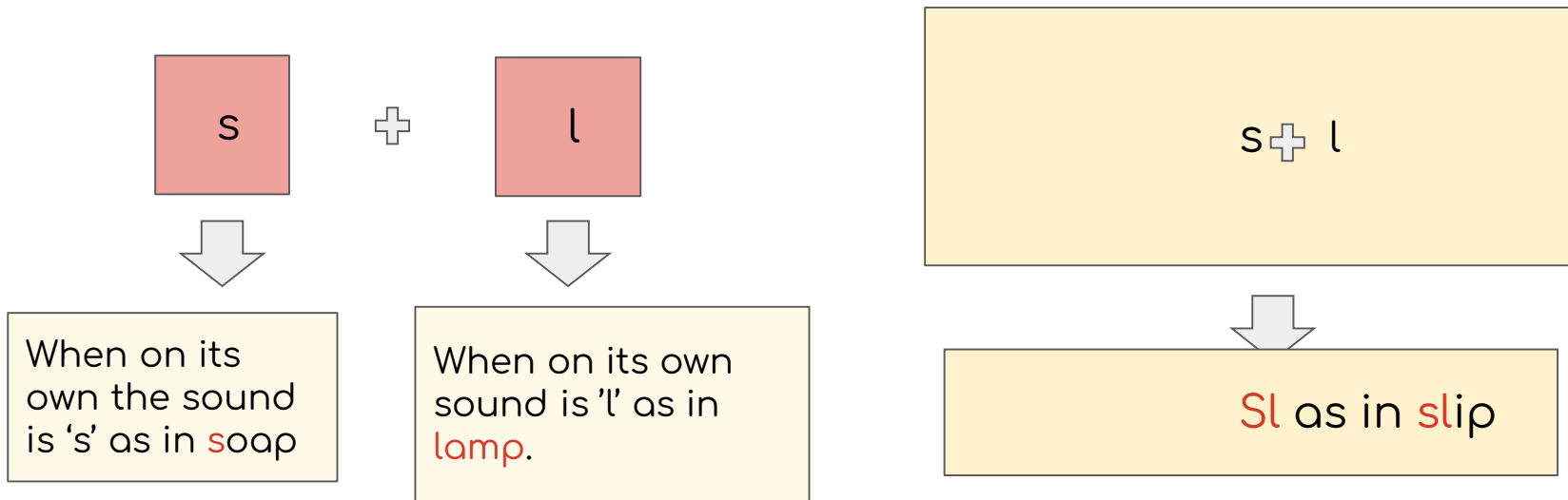
z is pronounced as in
buzz, or goes soft when
it has an e after it like
maize, and less stress
as in **lizard**

Introduction to making blends

Now is the time to introduce blends....

A blend is a new and single sound that is made after /when we combine 2 different letters /sounds.

For e.g.-



Looking at different types of blends.....

Common blends like
cl, gl, sc , dr,
pr,fr
Here, we
can hear
both
sounds.

Double consonant blends like
pass, ck as
in lock, doll
etc
Here we
read it as
one letter.

Consonant digraphs.
This is a
combination of 2
letters which is
read as a new
sound.
S+H= ship.
Sh as in ship.

We also have
Diphthongs- that is 2 vowels
put together.
Plain diphthongs-which is when
2 vowels are together to make
a new sound-like oil, boy, out
etc.
Diphthongs with r- When 'r' is
combined with a vowel there is
a slight change in
pronunciation. As in or, ir,,er,
ur, ar.
Car, sir, fur, colour etc.

Teaching blends.

Keep in mind to start in a simple manner, so working with letter families is the key .

Let us look at a few combinations.

- bl,cl,fl,gl,pl,sl
- gr,br,cr,dr,fr,tr
- sc,sk,sm,sn,sp,sw,st,sv,tw.

Note: These are sample lists .
You can increase or decrease difficulty level according to child's progress.

The diagram consists of three overlapping light green rectangular boxes arranged in a descending staircase pattern from left to right. The first box on the left contains the words: black, blind, blow, clap, click, flow, plab. The middle box, which overlaps the right side of the first box, contains: cron, drum, fret, trap. The third box on the right, which overlaps the right side of the middle box, contains: scar, skid, smell, spit, swat, stop.

Vowel blends continued.

Short vowel sounds like cat, bet, sip, run, hot.(This is presented in the initial reading stage)

Long vowel sounds – This is when there are two vowels in a word that is separated by a consonant. The first vowel is NOT pronounced phonetically, but instead letter name is used. E.g. make- here we say the regular a instead of aaah. (you will understand when you pronounce the same. This is presented much later.)

Some vowel combinations are pronounced di-

Different vowel combinations –(reading folders)

In the English language, different spellings can have the same pronunciation. Here is the list. This is introduced through READING FOLDERS , and at a much later stage.

ee
ee-reed
ea-sea
e-e-eve
y-penny
ie-field

ie
le-pie
i-e-line
igh-
high
y-fly

oa
oa-
goat
oe-toe
o-e -
note
ow-bow

er
er-her
ir-sir
ur-curl

au
au-haul
aw-saw
ough-
fought

ai
ai-ail
ay-day
a-e-
cake
ei-rein

Different vowel combinations (reading folders)

ou
ou -
out
ow-
cow

e
e-pet
ea-
head

oi
oi-oil
oy-boy

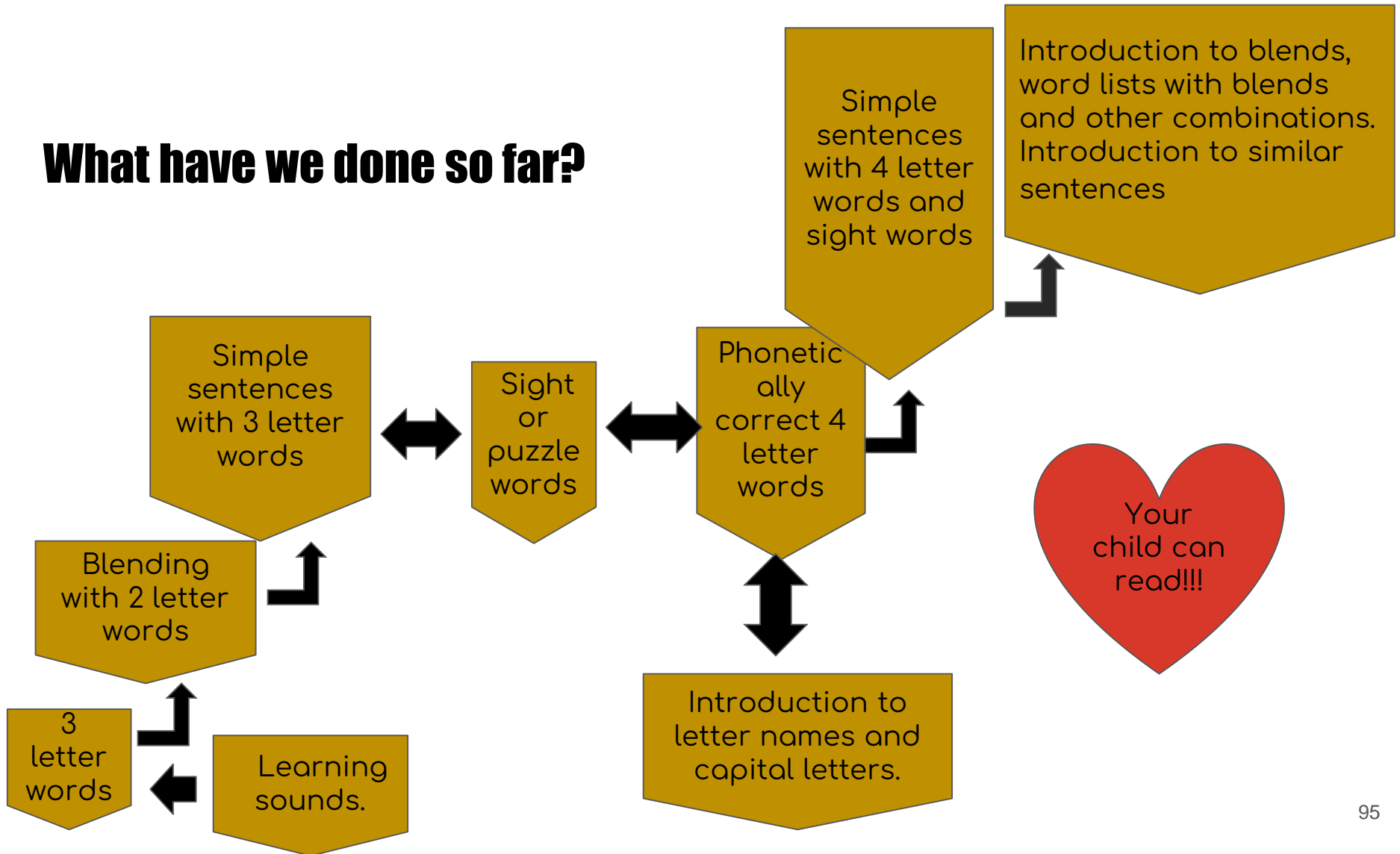
f
f-fox
ph-
graph

j
j-job
ge/gi -
gem
gin

s
ce-
cent
s-sin

ue
ue-sue
u-
e..blue
ew-new
oo-
hoof

What have we done so far?



Making reading fun!!

We have now reached a stage where your child can and should be able to read simple sentences. But there is still a long way to go and there are many different types of materials that can be used , especially in Montessori classrooms. Activities like reading folders, introduction to more complicated blends, digraphs etc. The learning is limitless.

But learning to read need not be only limited to books and lists .

Remember to include real life situations and actual context in how your child learns. This is not only for reading but in all learning situations.

This is the key to actual learning.

Making reading fun!!

The following pages are now dedicated to activities that promote reading by making it fun. Here are a few tips to help the process and give the child confidence-

Some children cannot pronounce certain sounds or words well . *Do not get angry or lose patience.* Speech delay or any kind of delay in learning should be looked at by professionals rather than just waiting.

Understand and observe your child. *Focus on what they can do well and use that to then slowly work on what they can't.*

Make note of which sounds your child cannot pronounce , and model or articulate slowly and the right way. *Point to lips, and model right speech. Avoid baby talk.*

Understanding content helps your child become a better reader. Activities that relate to real life situations will always help the reading process better.

Making reading fun!! Activities that help promote reading.

Puzzle and word cards.

These are a collection of pictures with labels. Layout pictures. Layout the labels in random order. Read labels aloud and have child match label to picture. Once child can read he /she or they can do this on their own .

Also, have labels everywhere. For your activities, for your actions, for your objects- everywhere!!

Activity cards

Cut out cards that are approximately 5" x 3" in size. Use two different colours for each set of cards. On one colour set, write simple action words that the child can do. Have child read the word and enact.

On the next set, write the word in front of the child, and read it aloud. Have child enact action.

Making reading fun!!

*Things
to
buy...
Apples
Bread
Banan
as
Jam
Butter
Juice*



Long word lists are game changers!! These need not just be long lists that we use in a classroom, but lists like grocery lists, shopping lists and recipe cards are what your child would love to do!

Labelling everything in your classroom or home is a great way to encourage reading!

Secret boxes-This is a good way to practise reading. Write words that need practise and give it an element of secrecy or surprise. Put in a colourful bag or box, and have child pick out one chit with the word written on it. Your child will then read the word. Children can read in pairs or play a game. Using colour paper too sparks interest.

Making reading fun!!

Making mini books !

This can be a together project! Pictures from a trip that you have been on, or from a celebration can be glued onto a scrapbook. Writing simple sentences about the picture will encourage your young child to read!

Object boxes with labels!

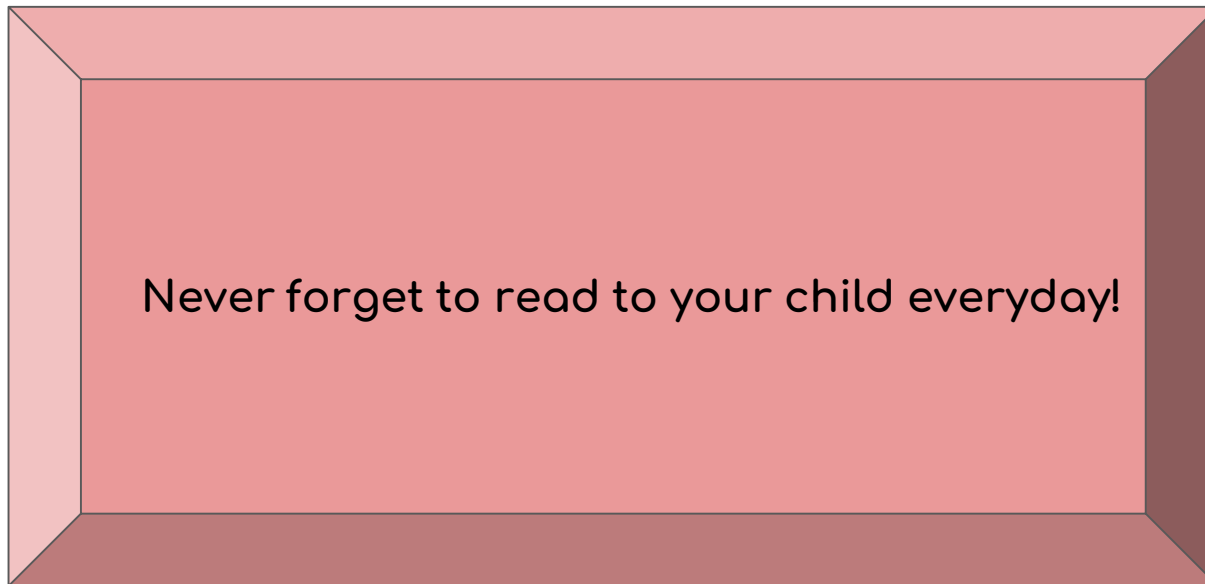
Object boxes are very commonly used in Montessori classrooms, and can be used by all. Normally teachers collect objects according to the blend sound that is being taught and labels are made for the same. This is read and matched.

What can be done in the same light is to collect tiny objects in boxes and make labels for the same. This will also encourage children to make their own labels too!



pelican

And most importantly.....



Meet the author.....



Gitasudha Sridhar is an Early Childhood mentor and specialist who enjoys being with children in this age group. Her passion is understanding how children learn and what makes them learn better!

With a Masters in Clinical Psychology and a Montessori degree, she is passionate about all that this age group does. Language and reading are her specialties!

Meet the illustrator....



Meha Vatsa is a Montessori trained teacher by profession, an artist by heart and creative by instinct!

Armed also with an engineering degree, her passion not only lies in being creative and including art in her work, but in seeing and understanding how it can be used to help children learn better.

Author contact- gitasudha@gmail.com