

Teaching Reading to Children with Down Syndrome



Patricia Oelwein
13110 NE 25th Place
Bellevue, WA 98005 USA

E-mail: poelwein@earthlink.net;
Phone: 425-883-8193; Fax: 425-869-7783

Use systematic instruction methods



- **Assessment**-Al Nahda Assessment of Functional Skills and Applied Academics-*Applied Academics domain; subject, Reading*
- **Goals and Objectives** based on assessment
- **Individualized Program Plan** to meet goals and objectives
- **Implementation** of the plan
- **Apply the steps in the Learning Process:** exposure, sensory input, perception, processing and pondering, retrieval and output, and feedback

Plan activities for each stage of learning acquisition, practice to proficiency, and application to practical use

- **Evaluation** make data-based decisions to continue or change program

Use individualized, top-down, language experience approach



- **Individualized-** each child's reading program is designed to meet his learning style, ability, needs, and interest
- **Top-down-** teach whole word first so it makes sense to the child; then teach phonics in context of words the student can read as opposed to **bottom-up** where alphabet and letter sounds are taught first.
- **Language experience-** words and reading context are within the student's experience what he/she reads is about him/her

Prepare your child for reading

Wire your child for reading

Become a partner in communication with your child
Interact with your child at his level of communication
Play with your child, letting him take the lead
Provide exposure to the printed word
Read to you child and let him/her participate/react
Sing to your child

Use match, select and name sequence

Picture lotto
Colors
Shapes
Cognitive concepts



Getting Started

When to start

Turn-taking interaction is well established

Matching, selecting, and naming (can sign) simple pictures mastered

Start at any age from 4 to 40

STOP when data show that the student is not making progress

DO NOT ALLOW THE STUDENT TO FAIL

Teach him/her to read symbols (line drawing) using same method

Try again later and determine if you should continue

He may not have the ability to learn to read, but give him/her a chance from time to time as he/she matures



How to start: Acquisition stage



- Introduce, one at a time, meaningful/useful sight words that are within the student's experience (avoid teaching words that the student does not have an immediate and on-going need for words will be maintained by use)
- Family names, classmates names
- Schedule/school words (reading, recess, math, lunch, foods, actions, feelings)
- Use picture cards (picture with words under it) and matching word card
- Use following sequence in acquisition stage; gradually increasing choices as student learns more words

Match

Select

Name (student can use sign language)

How to evaluate



- Use probe to determine rate of introducing new words
 - Assess (probe) using the last 10 words introduced (reading flash cards) at the end of each reading session each day taught
 - Mastery is at least three consecutive correct responses reading the word during probe
 - When a word is mastered it goes in the student's word bank
 - New word or words are introduced and he/she has 10 words in probe
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Practice to proficiency and generalize



- Play reading games for practice to fluency and comprehension
 - Provide a use for sight words learned
 - Make individualized books for the student to read
 - Make place cards and labels for the child to use
 - Make schedule for student to follow
 - Develop a word bank organized by initial letter of words mastered
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Introduce letters and letter sounds



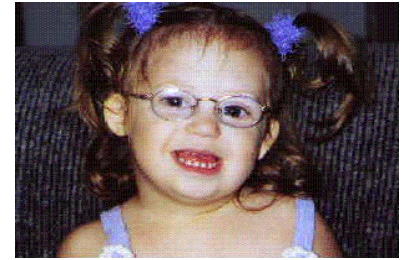
- Introduce letters gradually, starting with first letter of student's name, then first letter of other words child knows
- Play games to practice letters and letter sounds
- Provide on-going exposure:
 - read to your child
 - display alphabet
 - sing alphabet song
 - watch Sesame Street
 - use the library
 - let your child see you reading for pleasure

Word families

- Teach the words as sight words using picture cards
- Demonstrate how changing the first letter in a word family changes the word
- Play games making new words using word families
- Use "word family" words in books
- Transfer use of letter sounds to new words introduced



Keep it going



- Some students will be successful in basal reading programs
 - Others will continue with this language experience approach
 - *Either way, student must have on-going USE for reading--for pleasure, for learning concepts, for remembering information, organizing information, and for functioning in the environment.*
 - Reading success should be measured by how it benefits the student
 - People with Down syndrome who learn to read are generally overachievers in reading and comprehending beyond their mental age
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Writing



- Ability to write usually develops later than the ability to read
- Start by giving the child the opportunity to scribble and do his/her own thing using a variety of surfaces and drawing and writing materials
- Introduce drawing of people and familiar objects (start by doing joint projects)
- Teach him/her to communicate on paper by crossing out/circling symbols/words and using labels
- Provide verbal cues; use the vocabulary of writing--start, stop, top, bottom, straight, curve, cross, up, down
- Teach how to write only the letters the child knows or is learning
- Embed reading, writing, spelling in activities throughout the day in journals
- Avoid teaching him/her to draw letters (requesting that he/she trace, copy, or write letters that he/she *does not know* is asking him to draw them).
- Provide a model with lines (primary paper) and mnemonics, starting point, and arrows to indicate direction
- Use the "language of writing" as you demonstrate/assist
- *The Sensible Pencil*, by Linda C. Becht is a systematic program for teaching writing to children, developed for children with Down syndrome. (ATC Learning, P.O. Box 43795, Birmingham, AL 35243)

Spelling



- Student must first know names of letters and have a means to communicate the sequence of the letters; oral spelling, writing letters, cut-out letters, letters on clothes pins on a hanger, keyboards.
- Teach words the student has a use for in daily communication (own name, to, from, Mom, Dad, dear, love), and "subject matter" words (words needed to write journals and self-made books)
- Program for success (one letter at a time, if needed) play games for practice (peer "basketball" games, Scrabble, crossword puzzles)
- Introduce new words gradually; add-a-word, drop-a-word (use a probe)
- When student learns "word families," teach him/her to spell the words
- Teach student to look up words in word bank and primary dictionaries
- Teach student to use spelling check on word processor

Resources:

High-interest/easy-reading materials:

- *News 'n Views*, NDSS, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-1317 (A magazine written by and for teenagers and young adults with Down syndrome)
- Available from Academic Communications Association, Inc. Publication Center, Dept. 611, 4149 Avenida de la Plata, P.O. Box 4279, Oceanside, CA 92052-4279, phone, 760-758-9593.



Tom and Ricky Mysteries by Bob Wright: Set of 5 novels (1st grade

The Riddle Street Mystery Series by Elaine Pageler: for older teens and (1st grade readability)

Four Corners Novel by Penn Mullin: Set of 5 novels includes geography, history, adventure, and mystery (2nd grade readability level)

Unusual Events by Earl Thomas: Set of 5 action-packed novels about situations (2nd to 3rd grade readable levels)

High Adventure/Life Line: Three sets of 5 novels. (3rd to 4th grade

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