

Basic Phonics Principles for Early Learners

1) Children learn phonics in order to decode words. Phonics is not a useful tool in and of itself. Keep activities simple and practical!

2) Teach skills as needed. Kindergarten is not the time to teach that *ti* makes the /sh/ sound, unless a student needs or wants to read a word like *action*. Stick to the basics.

3) Similarly, once students know a skill, move on. Don't cover something again and again, or "teach" a skill that is already known.

4) Allow students to practice what they learn immediately. Teach one or two sounds, then give exercises that allow for practice with just that much. Don't wait until you've taught a long list of sounds before giving opportunities for reinforcement.

5) Teach a new skill just before it is used in a story.

6) Always give phonics practice in context. Give students words in sentences and stories, not just in lists.

7) Remember the ultimate goal of all reading is to gain meaning. If a student "sounds out a word" that doesn't make sense, encourage a rereading of the word and sentence.

Where do I start?

Begin with the consonants that are most easily distinguishable.

Some good letter sounds to use at first are the hard c, p, t, b and d. Try this fun practice idea called, [Which One?](#)

Also use these [Phonics Flash Cards](#) and teaching suggestions.

