



Parents' guide to sight words



At Springfield Central State School, in Prep and Year One, students are explicitly taught sight words. Sight words are one of the essential skills that you can help with at home. Practicing with your child will make a big difference, but it should be an enjoyable experience.

This guide has been developed to share some ideas on ways to make sight word practice fun for all!

Write each sight word on a card.

Sight words should be recognised by SIGHT. "Sounding out" will not always work, and students should be able to read the word within 2 seconds.

In the stack of sight word cards that you practice with, your child should have more known than unknown words to build in success. When he/she knows most of the stack, remove the easiest 3-5 and add 3-5 new cards.

Practice in short sessions. Two 8 minute sessions will be more productive than one 16 minute session.

If your child becomes frustrated, change activities or take a break.

Set goals with your child. How many can they get right? Raise the goal by just a few each time to build in success.

FLASH CARD GAMES

1. Can you find? Lay the cards on a table, face up. Ask the student to find a given word. If they find it, they keep it. Keep going until all cards are picked up.

2. Who has more? Give the flash cards to your child. If they read the word within 2 seconds, they keep the card. If not, you keep the card. The goal is that the child has more than you at the end of the game.

3. Concentration Using double copies of the words, take turns turning over two cards at a time, trying to make a match. The player must read the word correctly to get the match.

4. Go Fish Using double copies of the words, pass out all but 5-6 of the words. Put these in a stack, face down, on the table. Look for matches in your set of cards (each player must be able to read the word or the set goes in the stack on the table). Take turns asking each other for cards to make matches. The person with the most matches at the end is the winner.

5. BINGO Draw a simple Bingo card (5 boxes wide and 5 high) and put sight words in the boxes. On little slips of paper put the locations (B1 etc.). Draw a slip and if the child can read the word in the box they get to put a token in the corresponding box on his BINGO card. If he can't read it, you get to put a token in your corresponding box. The winner is the person who gets 5 boxes in a row.

TECHNOLOGY

If you have access to an iPad or iPhone, these free sight word apps are available

- Sight words list – There are 6 sets of words to practice and you can customise the cards and categories.
- Learn sight words – Students can swipe through the cards, and can click on the words to hear them.
- Sight words by Little Speller – This app has a lot of options to customise. Children drag letters and put them in the right order.
- Eggy 100 HD – From Reading Eggs, this app has access to 100 sight words and also has a choice of accents.

If you have access to the internet, there are many games that can be found through Google –

- ABCYa Dolch Sight Word Bingo
http://www.abcya.com/dolch_sight_word_bingo.htm
- Primary Games
<http://www.primarygames.com/langarts/sightwords/>

OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. Using a highlighter or crayon help your child find his sight words in print (newspaper, magazine etc.)
2. Read to your child, pointing to the words so that he sees the words in books.
3. Let your child read a book at his level. You supply the words that he doesn't know. He will be excited to see his words in the books.
4. Put magnetic letters on the refrigerator or on a metal cookie sheet. Let them make their sight words.

The Reading-Writing Connection

Research shows that Reading and Writing are connected and that writing helps children read, and reading helps the child write.

Find fun ways for your child to write his sight words. Ideas:

- Put shaving cream on a table and let him write the words with his finger.
- Write words with a stick in the sand outside.
- Encourage your child to WRITE. Help them write the sounds they hear for words they don't know, but help them make the connection between their sight words and writing by encouraging them to spell the sight words correctly. Provide as much support as needed. At first you may need to lay the cards out for the child to see, and later you may be able to just have them there in case the child can't figure it out on their own.