**Let Phonics Time! supplement your children's language arts curriculum!**

**Phonics Time! utilizes music to promote three levels of success in young children. Teach your children to point to words as they sing, and they will…**

1. **Gain phonemic awareness.**
2. **Master tough phonics concepts.**
3. **Develop the skills they need to read independently.**

**Phonics Time! songs are research-based…**

# RESEARCH

## MUSIC

**The fun, musical format of Phonics Time! makes learning to read exciting for young children. Research supports our use of music as a tool in teaching children to read.**

* To understand how music education can benefit reading, we need to consider the three stages of learning to read (Frith, 1985): visually recognizing words; learning the correspondence between visual parts of words (graphemes) and their spoken sounds (phonemes); and achieving visual recognition of words without going through the earlier stages. The critical second, or phonemic, stage is most important. Music facilitates reading by improving this second, sounding-out stage.

*(Weinberger, N., 1998)*

**Research suggests that music can have widespread benefits for children.**

* Music has the ability to facilitate language acquisition, reading readiness, and general intellectual development…to enhance creativity; and to promote social development, personality adjustment, and self-worth.

*(Weinberger, N., 1998; Citing: Hanshumaker, J., 1980)*

* Music offers great opportunities for communication and expression, for creativity and group cooperation – plus it's good for the brain and can enhance learning and intellectual development.

*(Weinberger, N., 1998)*

## PHONEMIC AWARENESS

**Research indicates that the first step in learning to read is becoming aware of phonemes, or individual sounds, in words. This is termed "phonemic awareness." Listening to Phonics Time! will help even very young children to develop phonemic awareness.**

* Phoneme awareness is more highly related to learning to read than is general intelligence, reading readiness, or listening comprehension (Stanovich, 1986, 1993). It is the most important core and causal factor separating normal and disabled readers.
*(Share and Stanovich, 1995)*

* The lack of phoneme awareness is the most powerful determinant of the likelihood of failure to learn to read because of its importance in learning the English alphabetic system or in learning how print represent spoken words. If children cannot hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words, they have an extremely difficult time learning how to map the sounds to letters and letter patterns -- the essence of decoding.
*(Adams, 1990)*

* Phonemic awareness is equally important in learning to spell.
*(Ehri, 1992; Treiman, 1993)*

* Preschool training in phonological awareness can have a facilitating effect on subsequent reading and spelling acquisition.
*(Lundberg, I., Frost, J., & Petersen, O.,1988)*

* To a person with well-developed phoneme awareness, our alphabetic system appears to be a reasonable way to represent our language. To those with little or no phoneme awareness, the system probably appears arbitrary.
*(Ball, E.W. & Blachman, B.A., 1991)*

* There is no possible way in which a child could understand and use the alphabetic principle with any degree of success without being able to isolate and manipulate…phonological segments.
*(Bradley, L. & Bryant, P., 1985)*

* Heightening phoneme awareness may help prevent some children from experiencing early reading and spelling failure.
*(Ball, E.W. & Blachman, B.A., 1991)*

**Children are able to link phonemic awareness to reading as they point to the words in the coloring book.**

* Phoneme awareness training facilitates early reading skill. In addition… phoneme segmentation training that closely resembles the task of early reading may have more immediate effects on reading than instruction that does not make this connection explicit (e.g. Lundberg et al., (1988)).
*(Ball, E.W. & Blachman, B.A., 1991; Citing: Bradley & Bryant, 1985; Lundberg et al., 1988; Cunningham, 1991, and Treiman & Baron, 1983)*

## PHONICS

**Once children have become aware of the sounds in words, they are ready to link these sounds to print. This is known as phonics. Research supports the use of explicit phonics instruction over purely "whole language" (implicit phonics) approaches in teaching children to read.**

* Program comparisons argue that explicit phonics, or the provision of systematic instruction on the relation of letter-sounds to words, was more effective than implicit phonics, or the philosophy of letting students induce letter-sounds from whole words.
*(Adams, M., 1990)*

* A major problem with implicit-phonics programs is that they introduce new word types without enough practice for the students to develop mastery of easy-type words. Explicit phonics programs typically introduce new word types at a more realistic rate.
*(Carnine, D., Silbert, J. & Kameenui, E., 1990)*

* Several empirical studies find that a 'mixture of decoding and comprehension instruction in the same instructional activity is clearly less effective' than separation of the two activities as done in explicit phonics instruction.
*(Groff, P., 1998; Citing: Grossen, B., 1997)*

* Phonemic segments do not seem to be spontaneously available for conscious attention…The crucial factor seems to be explicit instruction, rather than specific encounters with the letters of the alphabet.
*(Lundberg, I., Frost, J., & Petersen, O., 1988)*

* Without explicit instruction on the alphabetic code both phonemic awareness and reading novel material are difficult to attain.
*(Brady, S. & Shankweiler, D., 1991)*

* Use direct, systematic explicit phonics instruction as a primary component of a reading program. The issue is not whether we use phonics or whole language in reading instruction. Rather, the issue is how we use phonics; as a primary component of a reading program, as well as when we use phonics; at the beginning reading level.
*(Dakin, A., 1999)*

**Phonics Time! gives children the direct, explicit, and systematic instruction they need to make essential connections between sounds and printed words. Children who use Phonics Time! begin learning letter-sound associations and progress in an orderly fashion to learn some of the most complex spelling patterns in the English language.**

* Systematic, explicit phonics refers to an organized program where letter-sound correspondences for letters and letter clusters are directly taught; blended; practiced in words, word lists, and word families; and practiced initially in texts with a high percentage of decodable words linked to the phonics lesson.
*(Poindexter, C. & Oliver, I., 1998)*

* Children need to learn to decode words instantly and effortlessly. Most effective phonic instruction is explicit – making sure children understand key points, and systematic – building gradually from basic elements to more complex patterns.

*(Poindexter, C. & Oliver, I., 1998)*

* To accomplish the goal of teaching reading to all children, we need to provide direct systematic explicit instruction of phonics and language as a basic skill.

*(Dakin, A., 1999)*

* The great majority of experimental findings on reading development make clear that explicit, direct, systematic, intensive, comprehensive, and early teaching of phonics information is the most productive way to develop children's automatic word recognition skills.

*(Groff, P., 1998)*

* One of the central issues to first-grade reading instruction is that students need to be taught enough about the phonemic, phonic, syntactic, and word-attack and other self-teaching strategies to enable them to automatically recognize a critical mass of common words and know how to decode simple new words.

*(Honig, B., 1996)*

* Poorly developed knowledge of spellings and spelling-sound correspondences is found to be the most frequent, debilitating, and pervasive cost of reading difficulty.

*(Bruck, 1990; Perfetti, 1985; Rack, Snowling, and Olson, 1992; Vellutino, 1991)*

**<u>Phonics Time!</u> gives children direct instructions to help them understand and analyze specific spelling patterns. Research indicates that phonics instruction helps children to become better readers and better spellers.**

* Deep and thorough knowledge of letters, spelling patterns, and words, and of the phonological translations of all three, are of inescapable importance to both skillful reading and its acquisition. By extension, instruction designed to develop children's sensitivity to spellings and their relations to pronunciations should be of paramount importance in the development of reading skills. This is, of course, precisely what is intended of good phonic instruction.

*(Adams, M., 1990)*

* A systematic training program for stimulating skills in word analysis in first-grade children facilitates both reading and spelling acquisition.

*(Lie, A., 1991)*

* Logically, there are reasons for assuming that skills in word analysis are a prerequisite for both skills in reading and skills in spelling, because the alphabetic writing system is constructed on the principle that words can be segmented into a limited number of phonemes, and that each phoneme can be represented visually by a grapheme.

*(Lie, A., 1991)*

**Research supports the use of direct instruction methods to teach slower or economically disadvantaged students.**

* Perhaps the most influential arguments for teaching phonics are based on studies comparing the relative effectiveness of different approaches to teaching beginning reading. Collectively these studies suggest, with impressive consistency, that programs including systematic instruction on letter-to-sound correspondences lead to higher achievement in both word recognition and spelling, at least in the early grades and especially for slower or economically disadvantaged students.

*(Adams, M., 1990)*

**Research supports the use of direct instruction in teaching middle-class children.**

* Phonemic-awareness training is crucial for young children. Although many middle-class first graders can divide spoken syllables into onsets and rimes, they have difficulty sub-dividing these units into phonemes. Exercises with spoken words can help children perform such analyses.

*(Treiman, R., 1993)*

## COMPREHENSION AND INDEPENDENT READING

**Research indicates that phonics instruction gives children the foundation they need to develop comprehension skills and to become independent readers.**

* Comprehension fails not because of over-reliance on decoding, but because decoding skill is not developed enough.

*(Stanovich, K, 1994)*

* The highest predictor of the child's comprehension score on a standard reading comprehension test is a measure of decoding skill, the ability to read one word at the time out of context. This means simply that if you can understand the meaning of spoken language, you should be able to understand the meaning of written language. And the only way you can understand the meaning of written language is to be able to decode accurately and fluently.

*(McGuinness, 1997)*

* Children who quickly develop efficient decoding processes find reading enjoyable because they can concentrate on the meaning of the text. They read more in school and, of equal importance, reading becomes a self-chosen activity for them.

*(Stanovich, K, 1994)*

# DEFINITIONS

**Blend:** To combine the sounds represented by letters to pronounce a word; sound out.

**Comprehension:** Comprehension, “the essence of reading", is often taken to mean reading comprehension in the literacy literature unless restricted specifically or by inference from its content.

**Decode:** To analyze spoken or graphic symbols of a familiar language to ascertain their intended meaning. Note: to learn to read, one must learn the conventional code in which something is written in order to decode the written message. In reading practice, the term is used primarily to refer to word identification rather than to identification of higher units of meaning.

**Fluent Reader:** A reader whose performance exceeds normal expectation with respect to age and ability; independent reader.

**Grapheme:** A written or printed representation of the phoneme as b for /b/in book contrasts with /t/ in took, /k/ in cook, /h/ in book.

**Phonemic Awareness or Phoneme Awareness:** Phonemic awareness is the awareness of the sounds (phonemes) that make up spoken words. Such awareness does not appear when young children learn to talk; the ability is not necessary for speaking and understanding spoken language. However, phonemic awareness is important to understand the code of alphabetic languages and letters (the letter sounds). Having phonemic awareness provides some understanding of the notion that words are made up of phonemes. This insight is not always easily achieved. Phonemes are abstract units, and when one pronounces a word one does not produce a series of discrete phonemes; rather phonemes are folded into one another and are produced as a blend. Although most young children have no difficulties segmenting words into syllables, many find it very difficult to segment at the phoneme level.

**Phonological Awareness:** A broader term than phonemic awareness; refers to language sensitivity and ability to manipulate language at the levels of syllables, rhymes, and individual speech sounds.

**Phonics:** A way of teaching, reading, and spelling that stresses symbols sound relationships, used especially in beginning instruction.

**Sight Word:** A word that is immediately recognized as a whole and does not require word analysis for identification. A word taught as a whole.

**Sound Out:** The application of phonics skills in reproducing the sound(s) represented by a letter or letter group in a word.

*(Definitions taken from “Really Reading”*
*– Bossenmeyer, Melinda; Brown, C., Brown, S., Cockerham, B, and Valdes, K.)*

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