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Dyslexia Toolkit

How Singing, Playing Games and Other Fun Activities
Can Help Defeat Reading Disabilities

Elementary Grades



Linda Silbert, PhD
Alvin J. Silbert, EdD

A STRONG Learning Centers® Handbook for Parents
www.StrongLearning.com

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by Linda Silbert, PhD and Alvin J. Silbert, EdD



Dyslexia Toolkit
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Dear Teachers and Parents,

Extensive research has shown that children learn best when they are engaged and having fun. That's why every activity in this guide is designed for children to have fun while learning to read. Whether children are singing silly songs, playing card games, making paper chains or putting on a play, their reading improves because they are *actively* reading and having fun.

This is especially important for the child who has dyslexia. Not only do these children have difficulty learning to read, but their self-esteem is usually poor as a result. Why wouldn't it be? While their peers are reading and moving into chapter books, they're still struggling with beginning sounds.

The conundrum is that they need to practice more than their peers, but they hate to read. Since self-esteem develops around the same time a child learns to read, these children experience a two front attack on their self-esteem. Therefore, it's critical that they have as much fun as possible learning to read. By having fun, they'll practice more, improve more quickly and feel good about themselves.

This toolkit is a resource that we hope you'll keep and refer to often (as opposed to other activity books that are used once and discarded). Every activity is designed to be used over and over again by children of all ages and all levels to help improve their reading skills.

Some activities are more appropriate for children first learning the alphabet and phonemes, and some activities are more appropriate for the young reader who needs help with fluency and vocabulary development. Adapt the activities as appropriate by introducing more challenging words and examples as the child progresses.

My best wishes to you and all the blossoming young readers.

Dr. Linda
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<http://drlindasblog.com>



How do Children Learn to Read?

Reading is the process of recognizing words and comprehending their meaning. Some children pick up reading without any instruction. However, the majority learn to read at home or in school using phonics, whole language, or combinations of both methods. All children need repetition to improve fluency, which is accuracy and speed. Some children need more repetition than others.

Why Do Children Need to Have Fun When Learning to Read?

Some children are so excited that they are able to read, that reading is rewarding and fun. For other children, particularly those who struggle with reading, reading is a chore. This presents a dilemma when it comes to “practicing” reading.

All children benefit from reading. In general, the more children read the better their reading skills become. The dilemma is that the children who need the most practice are the ones who are most likely to avoid it. In addition to practice, struggling readers also need continuous repetition to improve their reading skills, which is something they also tend to avoid.

So how do we get these reluctant readers to practice? It’s easy. Engage these kids in play that involves reading. Often they are having so much fun playing, that they don’t realize they’re reading. And, without realizing it, they begin to associate reading with fun.

How is Self-Esteem Related to Learning How to Read?

Children learn to read at the same time they develop their sense of self, their identity. They become aware of who they are, where they are, and how they compare with others. At this stage, their thinking is black and white. They usually don't question why.

The development of the sense of self and their concrete, unquestioning thinking makes this a critical time in children's lives. The self image they develop at this stage tends to stay with them, in many cases, for life. Therefore, if they develop the image that they're smart, they'll feel smart, and sadly, visa versa. If they feel that everyone in the class is smarter than they are, they'll feel dumb. Therefore, if they have a bad experience learning to read at this stage, it will likely impact negatively on their self-esteem as they watch their peers excel in reading while they struggle.

What Can You Do If Your Child Has Trouble Reading?

Children have difficulty reading for many reasons. For example, some children aren't developmentally ready. Their parents want them to read at three, four or five years old but they can't. The cognitive structures in their brains just aren't developed. In most cases, in a matter of months or maybe even years, their brains will develop enough that they'll be able to learn to read. All they need is time for their brains to develop. During this stage, patience on the part of parents and teachers pays large dividends.

If the cognitive structures aren't developed, putting pressure on kids to read doesn't work. They may memorize words, and it may seem that they are reading, but they aren't. Forcing them to read, or applying any kind of pressure, only makes reading a negative experience, possibly resulting in emotional issues.

Here's a good analogy. Would a well-meaning parent consider serving a baby a big chunk of steak prior to the appearance of teeth? Of course not. The baby is not developmentally ready to chew. Prodding, cajoling or forcing the baby to practice chewing steak is out of the question. Given time, teeth will develop and chewing steak becomes doable, without scolding, crying, or punishing.

For some reason, parents have lots of patience for teeth but sometimes insufficient patience for brain cells. Perhaps it is as simple as being able to see teeth but not being able to see brain cells.

So what do you do if your child has trouble [reading](#)? Keep trying various strategies, being sure to keep the reading experience pleasant. Watch and follow the child. You'll know if you, or the teacher, are pushing too hard if your child cries or has meltdowns. The time to look further is when your child reaches six or older and isn't picking up reading. That's the time to contact your child's teacher and have your child evaluated to rule out a reading disability.

It's also advisable to talk to your pediatrician if your child is language delayed or is having trouble remembering the alphabet or rhymes. These may be early symptoms of a reading disorder. If your child is diagnosed with a reading disorder, many school districts provide support even before your child enters kindergarten. You may also consider finding a qualified tutor in your area who can work with your child. Contact us, and we'll help you find qualified help near you.

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What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a reading difficulty in a child or adult who otherwise has good intelligence, strong motivation and adequate schooling. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. It's not, as once believed, reading backwards or writing reversals.

Signs of Dyslexia:

- Difficulty reading single words
- Particular difficulty decoding nonsense or unfamiliar words
- Reading comprehension often superior to decoding individual words
- Inaccurate and labored oral reading passages
- Trouble reading small “function” words
- Slow reading
- Poor Spelling

How Will This Dyslexia Toolkit Help My Child Read?

This guide contains activities that use multi-sensory techniques based on the Orton-Gillingham methodology. Following this guide will insure that your child develops a strong phonics foundation, develops reading fluency and begins to develop reading comprehension, all while having fun. Almost like magic, they’ll improve

- Decoding
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

By following the suggested activities, young readers don’t just read, they play, and practice reading as part of playing. This i gives them ample opportunity to learn to read without stress and tears.

This principle is behind the success of our Strong Learning Centers® [Phonics Card Games](#) . Using the decks of cards you can make yourselves, children play familiar gameslike Memory, Go Fish, Old Maid or War. The kids often don’t even realize that they’re reading—they’re simply having fun playing these classic card games.

Activity 1: Sing-Along

Ages: Depending on the activity and reading level. The first activity can be used at any age, 3 and up

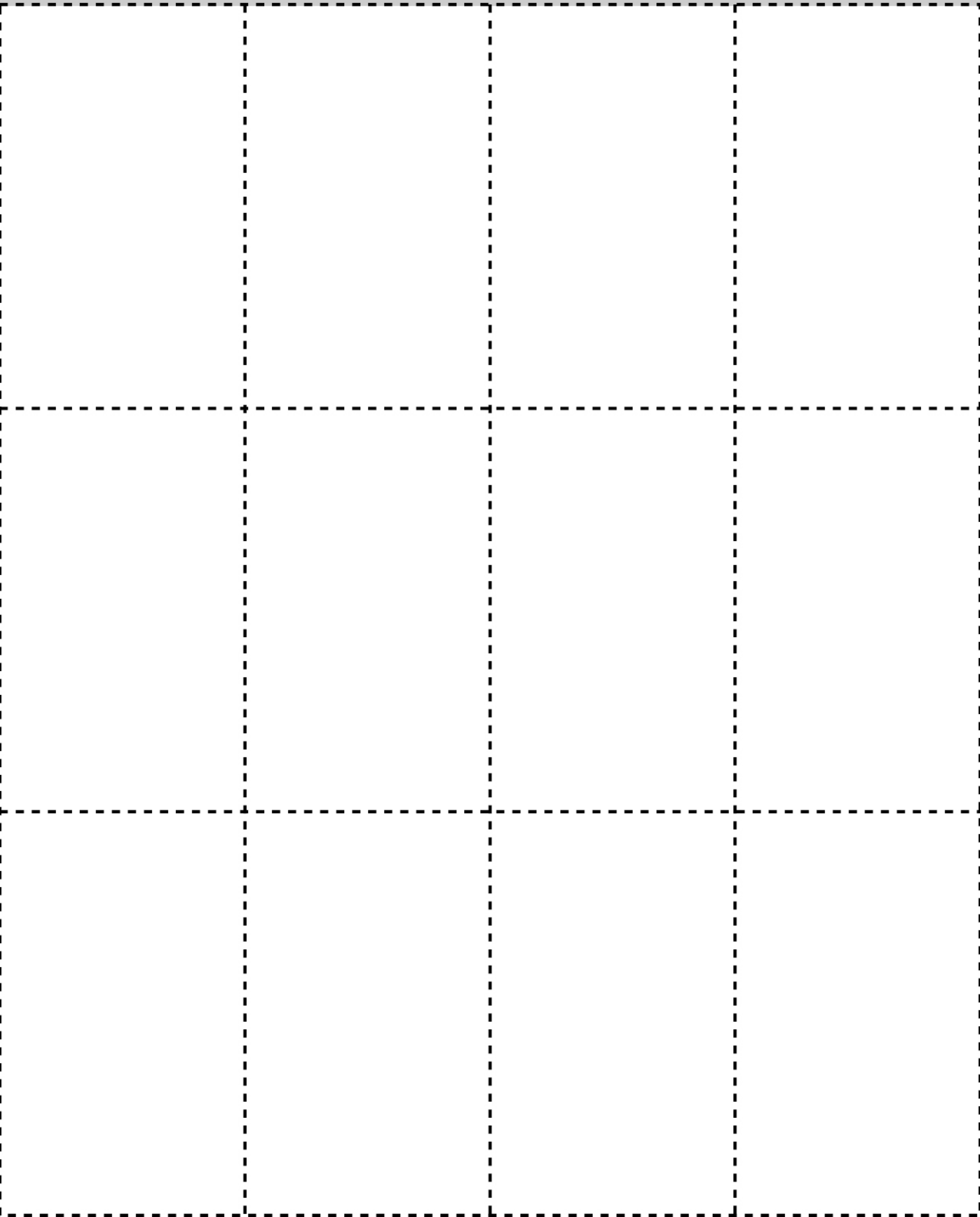
Materials: Index cards, sheets of cover stock, or heavy paper cut into cards.

Directions for all sing-alongs

1. Print sheets of cards from the template on the next page on regular unlined paper, card stock, cover stock or heavy paper.
2. On each card neatly print the letters or words your child needs to practice, one per card.
3. Cut out the cards on the dotted lines.
4. Put the cards in a pile.
5. Hold up one card at a time while you sing the following songs to the tune of "**Old MacDonald's Farm.**"
6. As you hold up a card, you may want to sing with your child. If your child is having any difficulty remembering the letter, sound or word, sing together which helps learning and is more fun.
7. Also, try having your child hold up the flash cards while you sing together. It may take a little longer, but the learning experience is well worth the time.
8. Besides being fun, this sing-along game can be used to practice almost any new material. Fill in the cards for whatever your child needs to practice. Be creative. The following pages contain Old MacDonald songs you can use to help your kids learn the alphabet, letter sounds, and simple words.



Print this page on card stock, cover stock, or heavy paper. Print as many sheets as you need.
Please discard this strip. Cut along the dotted lines to make playing cards.



Sing-Along to Learn the Letters in the Alphabet

For young children, sing the names of the letters in the alphabet. Remember, sing-along to the tune of [Old MacDonald's Farm](#). (For those who do not know the tune, this links to a very simple video by Matt.)**STEP 1:** Select any four cards that your child needs to practice. The cards can be in sequential order, ABCD, or random, DBCA

STEP 2: Pick up the four cards you've selected and hold up the appropriate one to your child as you sing.

STEP 3: Sing "I just learned my alphabet,

D, E, F and G.

With a **D D** here and **D D** there,

Here a **D** there a **D**,

Everywhere **D D**,

I just learned my alphabet,

D, E, F and G."

STEP 4: Repeat, holding up the other letter cards in turn, and instead of singing "D," sing the name of letter on the card you are holding up.

**I just learned my alphabet,
D, E, F and G!**

So, let's say you are now going to hold up the E. This is how it will go.

"I just learned my alphabet,

D, E, F and G

With an **E E** here and an **E E** there,

Here an **E** there an **E**,

Everywhere an **E E**,

I just learned my alphabet,

D, E, F and G."

Finally, finish the song with F and then G.

STEP 5: Once your child is comfortable recognizing and saying the four letters automatically, quickly and correctly, combine the letters.

"I just learned my alphabet,

D, E, F and G

With a **D D** here and an **E E** there,

Here an **F** there an **F**,

Everywhere **G G**,

I just learned my alphabet,

D, E, F and G."

STEP 6: Once your child recognizes these letters, and can sing the song comfortably, introduce four new letters. Again, begin with the letters one by one in sequence, then in random order, then in combination.

Sing-Along to Learn the Sounds of the Letters

Using the same cards, now sing the *sounds* of the letters, instead of the names of the letters. For example, the D sound is “Duh” and the H sound is “Huh.” (For this part, don’t use vowels.)

As before, it will go like this.

“I just learned some real cool sounds,

D, F , G and H.

With a **D D** here and **D D** there,

Here a **D** there a **D**,

Everywhere **D D**,

I just learned some real cool sounds,

D, F, G and H.“

Go through steps 1-6 as above.

**I just learned some real cool sounds,
D, F, G, and H!**

Sing-Along to Learn the Names of the Vowels

Using five vowel cards, sing the names of the vowels.

“I just learned all five vowels,

A, E, I, O, U.

With an **A A** here and an **A A** there,

Here an **A** there an **A**,

Everywhere an **A A**,

I just learned all five vowels,

A, E, I, O, U.

Continue by following **Steps 1-5**.

STEP 6: Once your child can say the vowels, and can sing the song comfortably, introduce the five vowel sounds.

Sing-Along to Learn Short Vowel Sounds

Using five vowel cards, now sing the *short sounds* of the vowels. A as in apple, E as in egg, I as in igloo, O as in octopus, U as in umbrella. (This will take some time. It's more difficult to learn than the sounds of consonants. (Their main sound is how you would say them when reciting the alphabet.)

It'll go like this.

"I just learned all five vowels,

A, E, I, O, U. (sing these as letters, not sounds, but sing the following vowels as short vowel sounds).

With an **A A** here and an **A A** there,

Here an **A** there an **A**,

Everywhere an **A A**,

I just learned all five vowels,

A, E, I, O, U.

Continue by following **Steps 1-5**.

STEP 6: Once your child can say the vowel sounds, and can sing the song comfortably, introduce four vowel blends. After this, introduce the other phonemes the child needs to learn or practice.

**I just learned all five vowels,
A, E, I, O, U!**

Sing-Along to Learn the Long Vowel Sounds

Using five vowel cards, now sing the *long sounds* of the vowels. A as in cake, E as in Pete, I as in ice, O as in hope, U as in cube. (Long vowels sound the same as when they are said when reciting the alphabet).

It'll go like this.

"I just learned all five vowels,

A, E, I, O, U. (sing these as letters, not sounds, but sing the following vowels as long vowel sounds).

With an **A A** here and an **A A** there,

Here an **A** there an **A**,

Everywhere an **A A**,

**I just learned all five vowels,
A, E, I, O, U!**

I just learned all five vowels,

A, E, I, O, U.

Continue by following **Steps 1-5**.

STEP 6: Once your child can say the short and long vowel sounds and can sing the songs comfortably, introduce vowel digraphs, vowel blends and then controlling R. After this, introduce the other phonemes the child needs to learn or practice.

Sing-Along to Learn Sight Words

Now make up cards using sight words your child needs to learn or practice. Consider selecting words from *The most commonly used words* on page 32.

It'll go like this.

I just learned some real cool words,

the, you, said and **could**.

With a **the the** here and a **the the** there,

Here a **the** there a **the**,

Everywhere a **the the**,

I just learned some real cool words,

the, you, said and **could**.

Continue by following **steps 1-5** as above.

STEP 6: Once your child can read these sight words, and can sing the song comfortably, introduce four new sight words.

**I just learned some real cool words,
the, you, said, and could!
With a the the here and a the the there,
Here a the there a the,
Everywhere a the the...**

Activity 2: Penny-Candy Flash Card Game

Ages: 6 and up

Materials: index cards, sheets of cover stock, or heavy paper cut into cards.

Directions:

1. **Set of flash cards.** First you need to make or buy some flash cards. These can be made from index cards, index cards cut in half, or cards you print from page 9. Write one word on each card.
2. **Select.** Select three word-cards from the pile and place them in front of the player. The player gets points depending on how fast he can read the words. Allow him as much time as he wants to practice, before, after or while he's playing. (Remember the goal is to learn to read the words.) After timing him, place these cards aside and place three other word-cards in front of him. Continue playing.
3. **Points.** Adult and child define what points are. For example, a point can be a penny or little candy such as a jelly bean or M&Ms®. Modify the prize system together as appropriate. It's amazing how fair children are when making up rules.
4. **Points.** Flash Card Game Point System
Example



0-5 Seconds	3 pennies or candies
6-10 Seconds	2 pennies or candies
11-15 Seconds	1 penny or candy
16 Seconds or more	0 pennies or candies

Activity 3: Make a Word-Necklace

Ages: 6 and up

Materials: Index cards, sheets of cover stock, or heavy paper cut into cards, hole punch (single punch or one part of a 3-hole punch).

Directions:

1. If you use index cards, cut them in half.
2. Write a word your child is trying to remember on the card.
3. **Word Ideas:** words with short vowels, long vowels, sight words, or from a particular word family.
For example, all words in the word family *all*: all, ball, tall, call, etc. or *ight*: night, light, tight, or *ound*: found, sound, pound.
Your child can make different necklaces for different categories.
4. Hold each card vertically and hole-punch it at the top.
5. Lace them onto a shoelace or piece of yarn for your child to wear as a necklace.
6. Place only three to five cards on the necklace at a time.
7. Once your child has learned the words, add another two or three at a time.
8. If the necklace gets too long or too heavy start another one.



Note: These necklaces are a great gift for grandma or grandpa.

Activity 4: Make a Paper Chain of Vocabulary Words

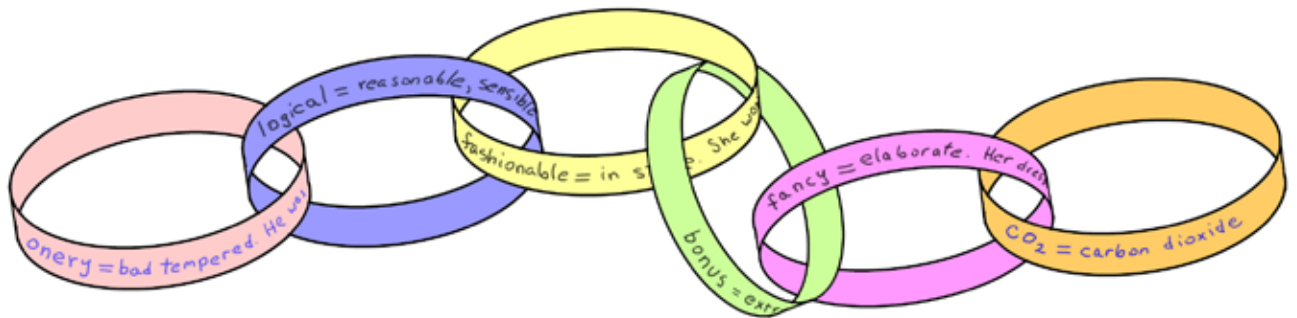
Ages: 6 and up

Materials: Colored construction paper cut into strips, paste or adhesive tape.

Directions: Cut out strips of colored construction paper to make a paper chain. Write a new vocabulary word and its definition on each strip of paper, keeping the writing on the outside of each link.

Keep adding a new link for each new vocabulary word.

Watch the paper chain grow as your child's vocabulary grows. See how long the chain gets in a week, a month, or the entire school year.



Activity 5: Play Short Vowel Tic-Tac-Toe

Ages: 6 and up

Materials: Paper, pencil, and eraser

Directions: The object of the game is to form four real words in the outside, two across and two down of a tic-tac-toe grid.

1. Draw a tic-tac-toe grid.
2. Put a star in the center square.
3. Put any vowels in the middle squares on all four sides (Select from: a, e, i, o, or u). They may be the same or different vowels.



4. The first player writes a consonant in one of the four corner squares.
5. The second player writes a consonant in one of the remaining three corner squares.
6. Continue until all four corners are filled in with a consonant.
7. The player that fills in the last word is the winner. It's a draw if the four words aren't all real words.
8. Repeat.

For One Player: One person can play alone, filling in all the letters, and trying to make four real words. Or, an adult can place the four vowels on several tic-tac-toe grids and the child can play alone.

For Two Players: If the two players are well matched, take turns starting first. If an adult is playing with a child, consider letting the child go first every time.

Activity 6: Read Poems

Directions: Lots of poems have been written for children. Reading poems is a technique for improving fluency and expression. Here are some poems to get started. It helps if an adult reads the poem to the child first (modeling). It's also fun to illustrate each poem in the space provided in the box.

The Squirrel

Whisky, frisky,
Hippity hop,
Up he goes
To the tree top!

Whirly, twirly,
Round and round,
Down he scampers
To the ground.

Furly, curly,
What a tail!
Tall as a feather
Broad as a sail!

Where's his supper?
In the shell,
Snappity, crackity,
Out it fell!

—*Author Unknown*

Read Poems-Continued

Clouds

White sheep, white sheep,
On a blue hill,
When the wind stops
You all stand still.
When the wind blows
You walk away slow.
White sheep, white sheep,
Where do you go?

—*Author Unknown*

The Postman

The whistling postman swings along.
His bag is deep and wide,
And messages from all the world
Are bundled up inside.
The postman's walking up our street.
Soon now he'll ring my bell.
Perhaps there'll be a letter stamped
in Asia. Who can tell?

—*Author Unknown*

Note: *This poem was written long ago when postal carriers were typically men, and way before emails and computers. Now that it's common for both men and women to deliver mail, the term "postman" is used less frequently.*

Read Poems-Continued

Mr. Nobody

I know a funny little man,
 As quiet as a mouse,
Who does the mischief that is done
 In everybody's house!
There's no one ever sees his face,
 And yet we all agree
That every plate we break was cracked
 By Mr. Nobody.

'Tis he who always tears our books,
 Who leaves the door ajar,
He pulls the buttons from our shirts,
 And scatters pins afar;
That squeaking door will always squeak,
 For, prithee, don't you see,
We leave the oiling to be done
 By Mr. Nobody.

He puts damp wood upon the fire,
 That kettles cannot boil;
His are the feet that bring in mud,
 And all the carpets soil.
The papers always are mislaid,
 Who had them last but he?
There's no one tosses them about
 But Mr. Nobody. *Continued on next page è*

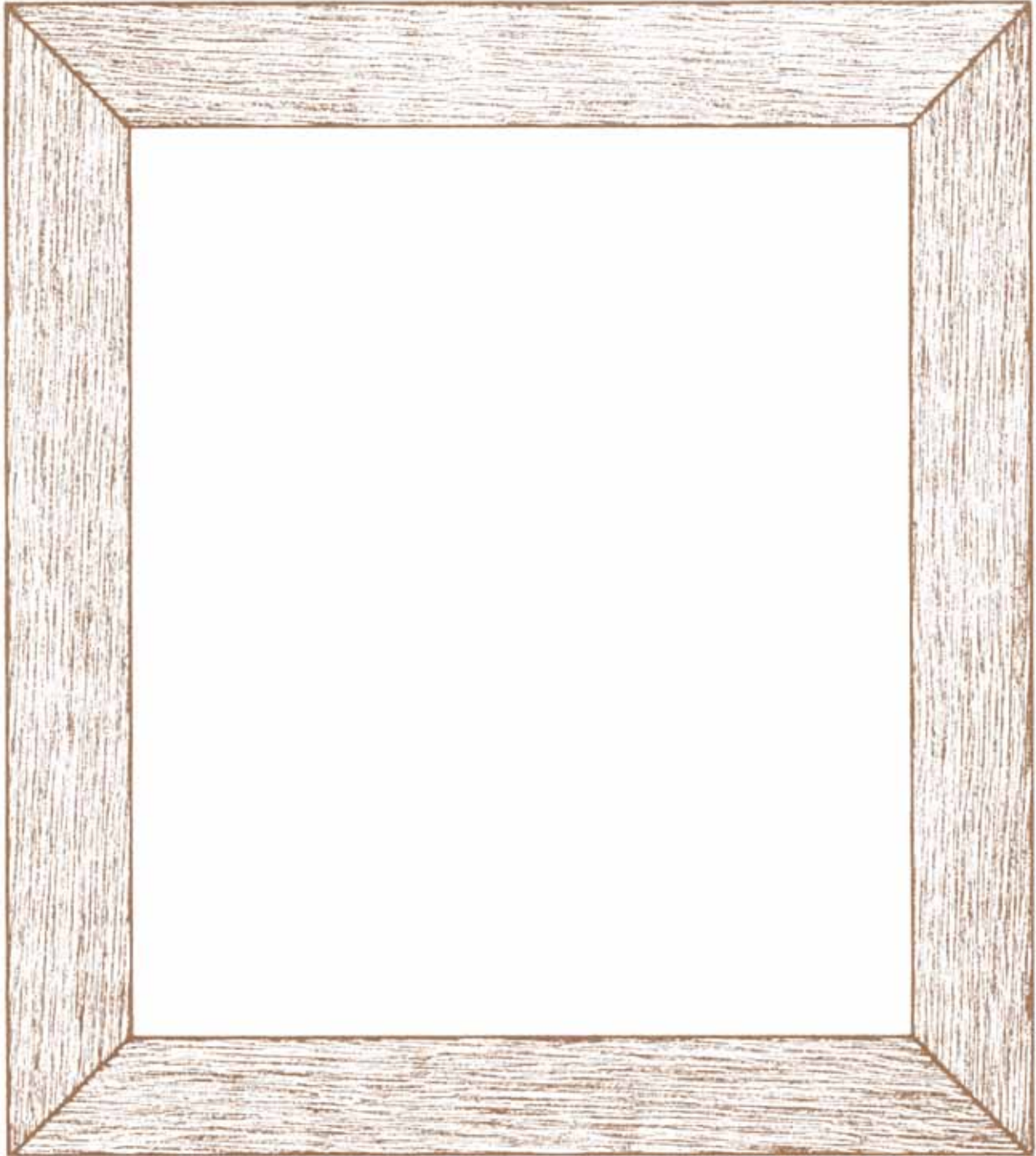
Continued from previous page.

The finger marks upon the door
 By none of us are made;
We never leave the blinds unclosed,
 To let the curtains fade.
The ink we never spill; the boots
 That lying round you see
Are not our boots—they all belong
 To Mr. Nobody.

—Author Unknown

Activity 7: Make a Collage of words

Ages 6-10. Directions: Cut words, phrases and sentences out of old magazines. Paste them together to write a story. Cut out or hand draw pictures to illustrate the story.



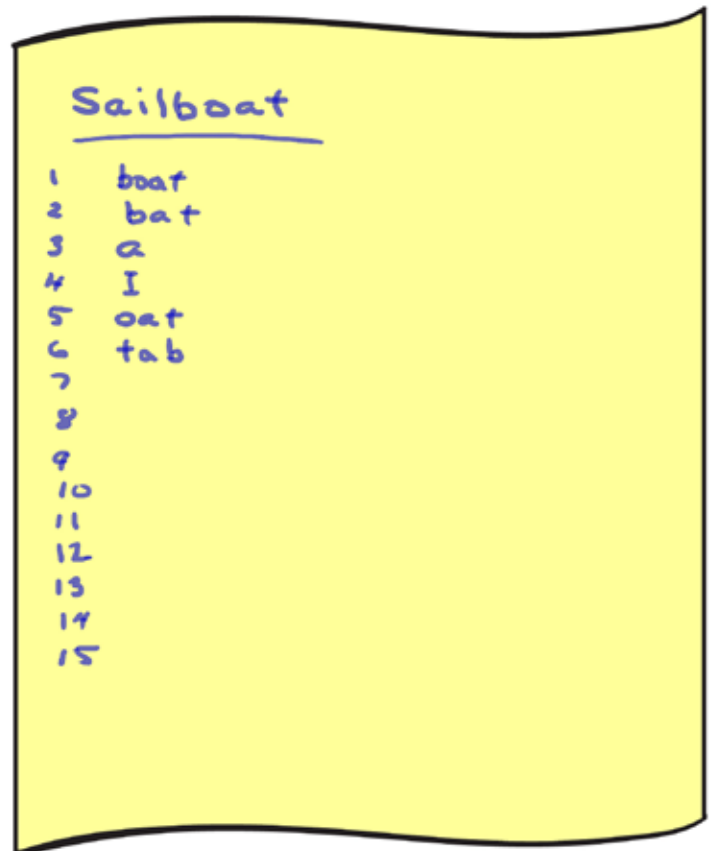
Activity 8: How Many Words Can You Make?

Ages: 6 and up

Materials: Paper and pencil or pen.

Directions: Try to form as many words as you can using the letters of each word. Here is an example. Sailboat: boat, bat, a, I, oats, tab.... Use different words for different seasons.

1. Summertime
2. Celebration
3. July Fourth
4. Independence Day
5. August
6. Hot Days of Summer
7. Vacation
8. Sunshine
9. Picnic
10. Lemonade
11. Campout
12. Swimming
13. Sailboat
14. Ice cream cone
15. Traveling
16. Baseball
17. Library
18. Picnic Basket



Activity 9: Read Plays

Directions: Many plays have been written for children. Reading plays is a technique for improving fluency and expression. This play for beginning readers is based on the fable, “The Country Mouse and the City Mouse.” It’s even more fun to put on the play using finger puppets. Everyone in the family can join in.

Country Mouse and City Mouse

Cast:

Narrator

Country Mouse

City Mouse

Setting:

Country

City

Act 1

Narrator: The country mouse and the city mouse were good friends.

City Mouse: I miss my good friend Country Mouse. We always had so much fun when I lived in the country. I know what I will do. I will go to the country and surprise him.

Narrator: City mouse ran out of the noisy city. He ran across busy streets. He ran by a jam packed bus and a long train. He ran by one red car, two blue cars, three white cars and four gray cars. He ran and ran and ran. Finally, he got to the country.

City Mouse: Hello, Country Mouse. Hello, Country Mouse. Where are you?

Country Mouse: Is someone calling me?

City Mouse: Yes, I am calling you.

Country Mouse: I am here under the old oak tree. I am happy you came to see me.

City Mouse: I missed the good times we had together.

Country Mouse: Would you like something to eat?

City Mouse: Yes, please. I just ran and ran and ran.

Country Mouse: Follow me and I will get you food.

Narrator: So, City Mouse followed Country Mouse. They went up a hill and down a hill. They ran by a stream and over some rocks.

Country Mouse: Here we are, my good friend City Mouse. Here is some good food for you to eat. I will eat with you.

Narrator: While Country Mouse ate the food, City Mouse just looked at the food and did not eat.

Country Mouse: Why aren't you eating?

City Mouse: I don't like this food. Why do you eat this food, Country Mouse?

Country Mouse: I live in the country. So I have to eat the food that's in the country.

City Mouse: Well, I cannot eat this food. The food in the city is good food. Why don't you come to the city with me to eat good food?

Country Mouse: I have never been to the city. I don't know how to get there.

City Mouse: Just follow me. You will love the city food.

Act 2

Narrator: Country Mouse and City Mouse ran and ran and ran. They ran up hills, down hills, on streets, on sidewalks and finally they ran into a big house.

Country Mouse: This is a very big house.

City Mouse: Yes, and we can eat the food the people eat in this big house.

Country Mouse: But I am afraid people will see us. I am afraid of people.

City Mouse: Don't be afraid. Just follow me.

Narrator: Country Mouse followed City Mouse all around the big house. Then City Mouse stopped running.

City Mouse: Here we are, my good friend Country Mouse. Just jump up here on this table with me, and you will eat good food.

Country Mouse: Okay, my good friend City Mouse. I will jump up onto the table.

Narrator: Country Mouse could not believe his eyes. There was cheese, hotdogs, rolls, cookies, cake and pizza.

Country Mouse: Wow! You are right. This is good food. I may never go back to the country.

City Mouse: Good. You can stay with me. Then we can have good times together again.

Narrator: Country Mouse and City Mouse ate and ate. They laughed and talked just like they did when they lived together in the country. Then suddenly, a cat ran into the room where they were eating.

City Mouse: RUN Country Mouse. RUN as fast as you can! Follow me.

Country Mouse: I am running as fast as I can.

Narrator: Country Mouse and City Mouse ran out of the big house, down the steps to the sidewalk, across the busy street and then City Mouse stopped, but Country Mouse did not.

City Mouse: We are safe my friend Country Mouse. You can stop running.

Country Mouse: No, I will not stop running. I am going back to my home in the country. I am too afraid to live in the city.

City Mouse: But you will have to eat country food.

Country Mouse: I would rather eat country food than to live in danger.

Narrator: So, the Country Mouse ran and ran until he got to the country where he felt safe and the City Mouse went back to the big house to eat the good food.

The End

Activity 10: Beat the Clock

Ages: 6 and up

Materials: Timer, Word list (on next page)

Directions: Read aloud words 1-5. Practice them until they can be read in five seconds or less. Then read aloud words 6-10. Practice them until they can be read in five seconds or less. Then read aloud words 1-10. Practice them until they can be read in 10 seconds or less. Continue reading aloud all the words in groups of five at first and then all together. The goal is to read all 100 words in less than two minutes. The person that can read these words in less than two minutes is a “Reading Champion.”

The most commonly used words ranked by frequency

Source: *The Reading Teachers Book of Lists, Third Edition, 1997*, by Edward Bernard Fry, PhD, Jacqueline E. Kress, EdD, and Dona Lee Fountoukidis, EdD.

1. the	2. of	3. and	4. a	5. to
6. in	7. is	8. you	9. that	10. it
11. he	12. was	13. for	14. on	15. are
16. as	17. with	18. his	19. they	20. I
21. at	22. be	23. this	24. have	25. from
26. or	27. one	28. had	29. by	30. word
31. but	32. not	33. what	34. all	35. were
36. we	37. when	38. your	39. can	40. said
41. there	42. use	43. an	44. each	45. which
46. she	47. do	48. how	49. their	50. if
51. will	52. up	53. other	54. about	55. out
56. many	57. then	58. them	59. these	60. so
61. some	62. her	63. would	64. make	65. like
66. him	67. into	68. time	69. has	70. look
71. two	72. more	73. write	74. go	75. see
76. number	77. no	78. way	79. could	80. people
81. my	82. than	83. first	84. water	85. been
86. call	87. who	88. oil	89. its	90. now
91. find	92. long	93. down	94. day	95. did
96. get	97. come	98. made	99. may	100. part

Phonics in a Nutshell

Adapted from No. 451 *Improve Your Reading Skills* Ľ Linda & Al Silbert Ľ www.StrongLearning.com

Review of Vowels

Rule 1: Vowels

Vowels are a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y. (The **consonants** are the remaining letters. Usually y is a consonant.) The distinction is that when we make vowel sounds, air flow is unrestricted. Note: To keep the rules kid-friendly, we've avoided using the technical terms **Digraph/Diphthong** that refer to two consonants/vowels that make one sound.

Rule 2: Short Vowels

Short vowels are usually followed by consonants in words or syllables. Examples: hat, man, pic/nic, dig, gob/lin.

It is easy to remember the sound of the short vowels by visualizing the following pictures:

a = apple on a bat

e = elephant on an egg

i = pig in an igloo

o = octopus on a cot

u = an ugly umbrella

Rule 3: Long Vowels

Long Vowels are easy to remember because they say their own names. Say each word below and you will hear the long vowel because you will hear the letter as it is said in the alphabet.

Long vowels have many rules:

a = cake, late, day, paid, pa/per

e = leaf, be, beach, re/peat, he

i = bike, pie, ride, line, fi/nal

o = go, hope, joke, goat, glo/bal

u = cube, true, blue, flute, tu/lip

The Silent “E” Rule: When a vowel is followed by a consonant, and the consonant is followed by a final e, the vowel is usually long and the e is usually silent. Examples: **like**, **take**, **rave**, **hope**, **bike**, **ride**, **tube**.

The Vowel Buddies Rule: When there are certain double vowels, like **ea**, **ay**, **oa**, **ie**, **ai**, **ee**, and **oe**, the first vowel is long and the second is silent. Examples: **bead**, **play**, **goat**, **pie**, **feet**, **toe**, **rain**. Perhaps you were taught the following little jingle in elementary school.

When two vowels go walking

The first one does the talking

The Open Vowel Rule: When a vowel comes at the end of a word or syllable, it is usually long. Examples: **pa**/per, **he**, **si**/lent, **go**, **mu**/sic, **ho**/tel.

Rule 4: 2 Vowels = 1 Sound

In some cases two vowels form a single sound which is not the long sound of the first vowel nor the short sound. The two vowels form a completely new sound. Examples: **good**, **auto**, **school**, **eight**.

Rule 5: 2 Vowels = 1 Blend

Many times two vowels blend together to form one sound. Examples: **out**, **toy**, **foil**.

Rule 6: The Bossy “R”

Single vowels followed by R usually result in a new sound. Examples: **car**, **letter**, **bird**, **fur**.

Review of Consonants

All letters in the alphabet that are not vowels are consonants. The following is a list of rules that will help you brush up on the ones you learned years ago in school.

Rule 1: Consonants

Consonants are all the letters except the vowels. Y is usually a consonant.

Rule 2: “Double Sound”

Consonant Blends

A consonant blend consists of two or more consonants sounded together in such a way that each is heard. Examples: bl, tr, cr, sw, sp, st, mp, gr, fl, spr, cl, gl, br, sc, sk, dr, pr, tw, sl, pl, scr, fr.

Rule 3: “Single Sound”

Consonant Blends

A consonant blend consists of two consonants that together make one sound. Examples: wh, th, ch, sh, ck, wr, ph.

Rule 4: Hard and Soft C and G

When C or G is followed by e, i, or y, it usually is soft. Examples: city, change, gym. When C or G is followed by any other letter in the alphabet, it is usually hard. Examples: country, gate, crown, group.

Rule 5: Silent Consonants

Silent Consonants are not sounded. Examples: gnaw, know, night, light, climb.

Rule 7: The Undecided “Y”

The letter Y at the end of words containing no other vowel has the long sound of “I”. Examples: fly, try, by, my. If Y is the only vowel at the end of a word of more than one syllable, Y usually has a sound almost like long “E.” Examples: happy, baby, funny.

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Get short, quick, use-today tips to help your child with everything from phonics to test-taking to study skills. Sign up for these tips at <http://drlindasblogs.com/sign-up>. You'll also get my monthly newsletter, the first chapter of my book "When Bad Grades Happen to Good Kids," and 25 Homework Tips.

For information, stories, and articles about School Success for your child, go to <http://DrLindasBlog.com>. Leave your comments too. We love to hear from you. Join my School Success community.

To sign up for future TeleWebcasts and other School Success events, go to <http://DrLindasBlog.com>

For private tutoring and educational products, go to <http://www.StrongLearning.com>
Telephone: 1-888-3STRONG

Other important resources:

International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Learn about remediation options
<http://www.interdys.org>

The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) Learn about learning disabilities and remediation options <http://www.LDANatl.org/>

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD) Learn about attention deficit disorder and remediation options <http://www.chadd.org>

ADDitude magazine online offers comprehensive resources for parents whose children have ADHD. Includes monthly articles by experts such as Dr. Edward Hallowell, school success tips, parenting strategies, information on learning disabilities, a forum where you can chat with other parents, and blogs. You can sign up to get email alerts for new articles, news and information. <http://www.additudemag.com>

Leave Your Feedback

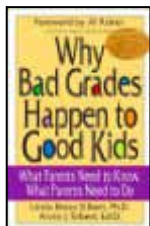
We appreciate your feedback. <mailto:Linda@StrongLearning.com>

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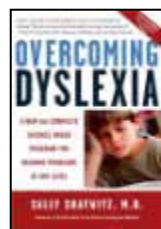
Recommended Resources for Parents & Teachers

Click on links to view details & reviews. Free shipping on orders over \$25 from Amazon.com



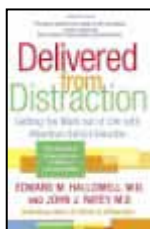
[Why Bad Grades Happen to Good Kids](#), by Linda Silbert, PhD and Alvin J. Silbert, EdD
~~\$13.95~~ Price: **\$10.67** Save: \$3.28 (24%)

"Why do bad grades happen to good kids? ... All I can say is look no further than this wonderful book. It doesn't matter what type of grades your child has achieved - this book is just one of those things you should read regardless of anything else. It makes you think and see problems so much more clearly than you did before." "A well-written book with a bright intriguing cover, packed with useful advice to cherish and share with others."



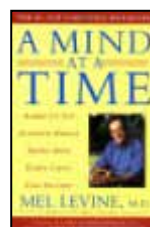
[Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science - Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level](#) by Sally Shaywitz M.D. ~~\$16.95~~ Price: **\$11.53** Save: \$5.42 (32%)

Yale neuroscientist Shaywitz demystifies the roots of dyslexia (a neurologically based reading difficulty affecting one in five children) and offers parents and educators hope that children with reading problems can be helped. Shaywitz's groundbreaking work builds an important bridge from the laboratory to the home and classroom.



[Delivered from Distraction: Getting the Most out of Life with Attention Deficit Disorder](#) by Edward M. Hallowell M.D. & John J. Ratey M.D. ~~\$15.00~~ Price: **\$10.20** Save: \$4.80 (32%)

... personal testimony regarding adult Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) as well a very readable presentation of the latest research in the field. Defining ADD as a collection of traits, some positive, some negative, the authors intend to encourage those who have this condition or are raising children with it and advise on how to maximize their abilities and minimize characteristics that may hinder them at school or work. An excellent resource.



[A Mind at a Time](#) by Mel Levine \$15.00 Price: \$8.94 Save: \$6.06 (40%)

Recognizing each child's intellectual, emotional, and physical strengths--and teaching directly to these strengths--is key to sculpting "a mind at a time." Based on his work with children who have learning or behavioral problems, Levine has isolated eight areas of learning (the memory system, the language system, the spatial ordering system, the motor system, etc.). ...describing how each type of learning works and advises parents and teachers on how to help kids struggling in these areas. a must-read for parents and educators who want to understand and improve the school lives of children.

Recommended Resources for Kids

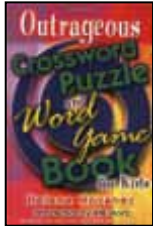
Improve Reading, Writing, Math & Study Skills



[Improve Your Study Skills-5 Book Assortment](#) by Linda Silbert, PhD and Alvin J. Silbert, EdD ~~\$39.90~~ Price: **\$31.92** Save: \$7.98 (20%) (From [StrongLearning.com](#))

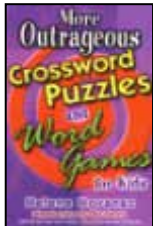
These interactive “how-to” books give students—12 and older—the tools to improve their study skills, reading, memory, writing and math skills. Grades will soar when students use these fun-to-use “how-to” books. They’ll develop learning skills that increase their confidence and self-esteem. Easy-to-learn techniques and hands-on exercises from real-life situations.

Improve Reading Skills



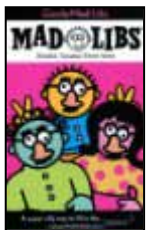
[The Outrageous Crossword Puzzle and Word Game Book for Kids](#) by Helene Hovanec & Will Shortz Price: **\$7.95**

This brand-new collection of word searches, fill-in-the-blanks, crossword puzzles, and word scrambles is just for you! Full of riddles and jokes, these puzzles are not only fun, but funny, too. A special introduction by Will Shortz, the crossword editor of The New York Times, points out just how fun these games can be.



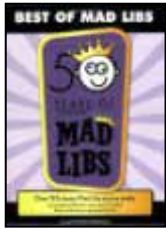
[More Outrageous Crossword Puzzles and Word Games for Kids](#) by Helene Hovanec & Will Shortz. Price: **\$7.95**

This second collection features zany crossword puzzles and awesome word games by acclaimed children's puzzle book author Helene Hovanec is chock-full of fun. With plenty of riddles and puns, kids will groan happily while solving a diverse range of puzzles. NY Times crossword puzzle editor Will Shortz writes a funny introduction to begin the book, followed by a special tricks of the trade primer designed to help kids solve each and every puzzle.



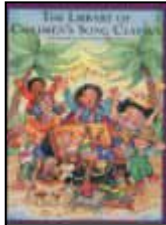
[Goofy Mad Libs](#) by Roger Price. Price: **\$3.99**

Be your own comedy writer! The idea is simple. Someone asks for a part of speech: a verb, a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. We've included definitions and examples of the parts of speech in case you've forgotten. Players call out their ideas to fill in the blanks and in the end, you have a story reeling from one silly sentence to another until nothing makes sense. That's what you call a Mad Lib®, the world's greatest word game. Players have been howling with friends or laughing all to themselves for over 35 years!



[Best of Mad Libs](#) by Roger Price. Price: **\$6.99**

A hilarious way to read, write, and giggle. Over the last 50 years, Price Stern Sloan has published hundreds and hundreds of Mad Libs stories. Come fill out over 125 of the funniest ones in this deluxe oversize edition. This book also includes a history of the game as told by the creator Leonard Stern (complete with pictures) and stories filled out by today's hottest stars!



[The Library of Children's Song Classics](#) by Amy Appleby ~~\$24.95~~ Price: **\$16.47** Save: \$8.48 (34%)

An illustrated volume of storybook, and holiday songs, lullabies, marches, and rounds. Easy-to-read lyrics, piano arrangements, and guitar chords. Includes Simple Simon, This Old Man, and Take Me Out To The Ballgame.



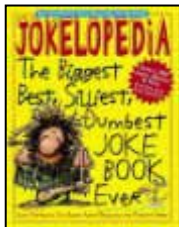
[Mom and Me Cookbook](#) by Annabel Karmel ~~\$12.99~~ Price: **\$9.35** Save: \$3.64 (28%)

With basic cooking techniques and tips, simple first recipes, and tasty, nutritious meal ideas, Annabel Karmel's new family cookbook helps children ages three and up work with their parents to prepare a yummy array of favorite foods.



[The Complete Book of Origami: Step-by-Step Instructions in Over 1000 Diagrams](#) by Robert J. Lang ~~\$12.95~~ Price: **\$9.32** Save: \$3.63 (28%)

Create timeless figures with clear, step-by-step instructions, helpful diagrams. Simple to advanced objects: cube, parrot, rabbit, seagull, cuckoo clock, rocket, mouse, elephant, violinist, Viking ship, more.



[Jokelopedia: The Biggest, Best, Silliest, Dumbest Joke Book Ever](#) by Ilana Weitzman ... ~~\$11.95~~ Price: **\$8.60** Save: \$3.35 (28%)

Jokelopedia is the mother of all joke books—an all-encompassing, gut-busting collection of more than 1,700 jokes for every occasion. 59 elephant jokes, including Why are elephants banned from public swimming pools They always drop their trunks. Dozens of knock-knock jokes, like Knock, knock./ Who's there?/Raven./Raven who?/Raven lunatic who wants to knock your door down!



[DC Super Heroes: The Ultimate Pop-Up Book](#) DC Comics (Author), Matthew Reinhart ~~\$29.99~~ Price: **\$19.79** Save: \$10.20 (34%)

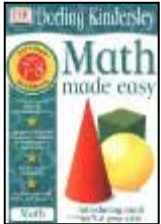
Pop-up engineer Matthew Reinhart celebrates the history, heroes, and villains of the DC Universe in this ultimate 3-D masterpiece! Bursting with over 25 impressive pop-ups, this deluxe format features a variety of unique novelty elements-including a light-up Bat-Signal, a cosmic Justice League of America battle scene, a twirling Lasso of Truth, and a transparent Invisible Jet!

Improve Math Skills



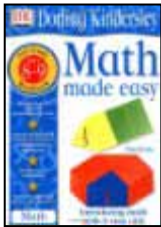
[Math Made Easy: First Grade Workbook](#) by DK Publishing ~~\$14.99~~ Price: **\$10.19** Save: \$4.80 (32%)

First Grade: Provides practice at all the major topics for Grade 1 with emphasis on addition and subtraction concepts. Includes a review of Kindergarten topics and a preview of topics in Grade 2.



[Math Made Easy: Second Grade Workbook](#) by DK Publishing ~~\$14.99~~ Price: **\$10.19** Save: \$4.80 (32%)

Second Grade: Provides practice at all the major topics for Grade 2 with emphasis on addition and subtraction of larger numbers. Includes a review of Grade 1 topics and a preview of topics in Grade 3. Includes Times Tables practice.



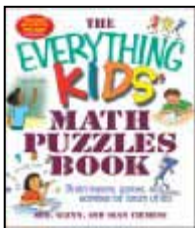
[Math Made Easy: Third Grade Workbook](#) by DK Publishing ~~\$14.99~~ Price: **\$10.19** Save: \$4.80 (32%)

Third grade: Provides practice at all the major topics for Grade 3 with emphasis on basic multiplication and division facts. Includes a review of Grade 2 topics and a preview of topics in Grade 4. Includes Times Tables practice.



[5-Minute Math Problem of the Day: 250 Fun, Multi-Step Problems That Sharpen Math Reasoning, Number Sense, and Computation Skills](#) ~~\$11.99~~ Price: **\$9.59** Save: \$2.40 (20%)

Chock-full of problems to help your students exercise essential problem-solving skills every day of the year. These fun, multi-step problems will save you time and fuel your students' interest in: whole number concepts and operations, decimals, fractions, measurement, geometry, and more! Leveled to meet a range of abilities. Reproducible.



[The Everything Kids' Math Puzzles Book: Brain Teasers, Games, and Activities for Hours of Fun](#) (Everything Kids Series) Price: **\$7.95**

Who knew that math could be so cool? Crammed with games, puzzles, and trivia, The Everything® Kids' Math Puzzles Book puts the fun back into playing with numbers! If you have any fear of math—or are just tired of sitting in a classroom—The Everything® Kids' Math Puzzles Book provides hours of entertainment. You'll get so caught up in the activities you won't even know you're learning!