



aurora
auroraproduction.com



Early Bird Readers



a guide for parents and teachers

Early Bird Readers

A parent and teacher guide

Children are like flowers in our garden. God puts them there, but it is up to us to nurture them and help them to blossom.

Early Bird Readers program, created by Jasmine St. Clair, and Derek and Michelle Brookes
Illustrations by Agnes Lemaire
Design by Giselle LeFavre
ISBN 13 for the *Early Bird Readers* program: 978-3-03730-345-0

Copyright © 2007, Aurora Production AG, Switzerland
All Rights Reserved
Printed in China
Visit our Web site at: www.auroraproduction.com

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Teaching Tips.....	4
Dos of Sight Reading.....	10
Don'ts of Sight Reading.....	10
Expanding Your Reading Course	11
Phonics.....	13
Phonetic Words	19
Games with Words and Sounds	22
Additional Teaching Tips.....	25
Testimonials.....	27
Conclusion.....	30

Introduction

There is no great secret you need to know in order to teach a child to read, beyond what you do naturally as a parent—encourage, praise, and show your enthusiasm as your child progresses. Learning is the greatest adventure of life. All children possess this belief and always will, unless we persuade them otherwise by making learning boring or full of pressure.

Reading is perhaps the primary skill that is needed for a good education, as much of learning is based on the ability to read. As parents and teachers we should do our best to expand our children's thinking and help them to communicate their feelings and ideas.

Here's something that may surprise you: Children have the ability to recognize and distinguish between words when they are only one year old, read sentences when they are two years old, and whole books when they are three years old. What's more, children love learning! If we can see this potential in each child we teach, we will be full of enthusiasm to make the most out of each hour and day of learning.

Children who grow up in an environment where a variety of reading materials are made available are more likely to develop a greater interest in reading than if they do not have that input. They will also

progress more quickly if they have been read to from an early age. Simple books that are of special interest to children can also help them to begin to learn to read, by encouraging them to point out any words they begin to recognize.

A cardinal rule in teaching a child to read is for the parent (or teacher) to approach it as a fun, joyous, and happy time to be together. When teaching reading, a parent should never forget these things:

- ▶ Learning is life's most exciting game; it is not work.
- ▶ Learning is a reward; it is not a punishment.
- ▶ Learning is a pleasure; it is not a chore.
- ▶ Learning is a privilege; it is not denial.

Children differ in how they progress in reading, but one thing remains constant: Your personal interest and attention as the parent or teacher can make all the difference. Almost any approach you take to teaching reading will succeed if your child is happy, motivated, interested, and enjoys the experience. Often the hyperactivity of a two- or three-year-old is the result of a boundless thirst for knowledge. If your child is given the opportunity to learn, he or she will very likely be less hyperactive and better able to learn about the world.

Many people believe that young children may not have the attention span required to learn to read. However, if your times of learning are active and not drawn out, you may find out that the opposite is true, and your children will associate learning to read with enjoyment, which will help keep their interest, and will increase their desire to learn. Young children are much less awed by reading than older children, and do not consider it a subject full of frightening abstracts; instead, they view it as another exciting thing to learn.

One key to success is to make sure your children know they are making progress. When children are praised for their accomplishments, they are then motivated to continue learning.

Beginning to read can be particularly fun for small children as they start to see all the new words they are able to recognize and read on their own. At the end of a reading session, a simple review of new words encountered, a liberal application of praise for progress made, a sneak peek at what they have to look forward to next time, and an affectionate commendation in a hug—all these are great motivators for most children.

A word about sight reading: Sight reading is based on the principle that our brain is like a computer. It receives extensive information on a daily basis, and the more it receives, the greater its capacity to

receive becomes. Research has determined that by the age of five, a child has acquired eighty percent of all the knowledge he will learn, so teaching reading during the one to five age bracket is very effective. Young children are linguistic geniuses and by the age of five they have usually learned one language (or even two or three), sports, simple mathematics, basic writing skills, and much more. Their ability to learn is at its peak, and they have the potential to learn more quickly than they would at a later stage of their lives.

Young children can learn almost anything at an early age if it is presented in a clear, informative, and factual manner. Realizing that makes us aware of the great potential of children, and also the great responsibility of teaching a child.

Teaching Tips

The *Early Bird Readers* program has been created for very young children. You may want to start using it when your child is two, three, or four years old. Accompanying this reading program you will find a helpful set of flashcards, a read-along CD, some bookmarks, a progress chart, and several certificates.

Begin by teaching your child to recognize and read the words on the flashcards before he or she starts the first reader. The same typeface

is used in the readers and on the flashcards to make it easy for the beginning reader to identify the new words.

Introducing a new reader

Before you start a child on a new reader series, begin by showing them the first reader. Explain that they will be able to read this *whole* book on their own as soon as they learn how to read a few words. Briefly show the pictures in the reader, introducing the main characters. Take special care to point out any particular interests your child might have that are featured in the readers; for example, cars, a puppy, a doll, a kitten, a ball, etc.

Show the child the small pack of flashcards that contains the words from the first reader. Using flashcards as preparation for actually reading from a book breaks the learning process into smaller steps and helps guarantee that the child's initial experiences with reading will be successful.

***Early Bird Reader* flashcards**

With every booklet in the *Early Bird Readers* program there is an accompanying set of flashcards. Helping a beginner reader to first recognize each new word on flashcards takes time and patience, but the easier you make it for your child to succeed in this reading venture, the more enjoyable it will be for both of you, and the faster progress will be made.

There are different ways of positioning flashcards. Find out which way is most effective with your child. You can hold the cards up, or you can put them on a table, or on the floor in front of you. A toddler or young child can also sit on your lap as you show the cards.

They are called “flashcards” because you “flash” them to the child fairly quickly. Your child sees the image of the word almost the instant you show it; in that same instant you say what the word is and quickly move on to the next card. You don’t want your child to become bored. Keep the experience game-like—fast, fun, and upbeat.

Do not test the child. Speak clearly when you say each word, as you show the card to the child. Make sure your fingers do not cover the word.

On the bottom right-hand corner of the flashcard there is an identification number. The numbering on the flashcards coincides with the order in which new words are introduced in each book. Begin by presenting the first *ten* words introduced in the reader. Show the child the group of words at least two to three times a day for five days. After flashing the cards for five days, the child can start to read the book, but should still continue with the flashcards.

After five days of showing the ten flashcards, omit one word (the word the child knows best) from the flashcard stack and add a new word.

Continue to introduce new reading words, always keeping five or so flashcards ahead of the pages in the book he or she is reading. Avoid the child reading past the point where new words that haven't been learned yet show up, especially in the first few books.

It's important to *introduce* new words in the same progression that the words appear in the reader. However, you can *flash* them in whatever order you like. In fact, variety in the order is good, as some children with good memories can tend to remember the order the words are flashed in and appear to know the words, but have actually memorized the line-up of the words instead of the words themselves.

Some children progress more quickly than others when it comes to identifying words. For some children five days is sufficient to learn new words; others may need longer, and you can use some of the games listed in this book to continue to review them with your child, without boring him or her.

Your child will learn some words more quickly than others, and as he or she progresses through the books in the series, new words will be learned faster. When removing and adding new words to the flashcards you present, it's important to remove the words that your child knows best first, so that there is adequate time to learn the words that require a little more time to learn.

If your child seems to begin losing interest in flashcards, don't insist on finishing the session and risk boring your child. Leave the flashcards for another time in the day, or use a different approach, like playing a game with the words. Some children are more alert and focused at specific times of the day, so schedule your child's schooling at a time when he or she is attentive and alert.

End each reading or flashcard session with lots of praise. Be enthusiastic and sincerely praise your child.

Read-along audio CD

Included in the *Early Bird Readers* program is a CD that includes a full reading of each of the books in the series. It is read at a pace that a beginning reader would be reading the text. There is a sound to indicate when it is time to turn the page. A child who is learning to read or practicing his or her reading can play the CD, and follow along with the reader—ideally while also reading aloud along with the CD.

A simple reading game

Here is a simple but effective reading game that many children enjoy. All you need to do is use the stack of flashcards that are *already learned*. It's guaranteed that your child will win! If he or she knows the card, *they* keep it, and if they don't know it, *you* keep it. When the game is finished, the child will usually have more cards than you do.

Then you can review the cards you hold, and give them a chance to get all yours if the cards are read correctly on the second round!

While it is not good to test a child, this fun game gives the same feedback to you as testing, but without the negative effects that testing can have. This game is effective and enjoyable for both younger and older children. Be sure the child has had sufficient practice and knows many of the words before you play this game.

More about flashcards

In order to facilitate your reading program, it helps to be well organized and have a box or a reading kit where you keep the readers and flashcards. When you have built up various sets of flashcards, it's helpful to put a rubber band around each set to keep them together.

If you wish to include other books your child enjoys in your reading program, you may need to make a corresponding set of flashcards. This is not too difficult, just a little extra work! Print the letters clearly and accurately, matching the style of print to the appearance of the words in the book. Double-check that the spelling of each word is correct. If a book uses a typeface that is unusual or difficult for children to decipher, you may want to wait on introducing that book until the child is more secure and experienced in reading a standard and simple typeface.

Dos of Sight Reading

- ☞ Be joyous! Love teaching the children that you are with.
- ☞ Reward a child for success by lavishing praise on the child.
- ☞ Be enthusiastic.
- ☞ Eliminate possible distractions. Be sure that you have the child's full attention.
- ☞ When teaching children to read, it's important that they learn to read from left to right. Use your finger or a pencil, and move it under the words to guide their eyes from left to right.

Don'ts of Sight Reading

- ☞ Don't bore the child by going too slow.
- ☞ Don't test the child. Simply show the card and say the word aloud.
- ☞ Don't continue a session if the child loses interest.
- ☞ Don't pressure a child to learn.