

Teaching the Reading Decoding Skills

Use this graphic organizer to help you determine what sequence to teach reading decoding skills. The development of decoding skills works in conjunction with other literacy acquisition activities such as language development, read-alouds, phonological awareness, comprehension, and so on.

Month	What to Teach									
September	1	2								
October	1	2	3	4						
November	1	2	3	4						
December	1	2	3	4	5	6				
January	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Early February	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Late February		2		4	5	6	7	8		
March		2			5	6	7	8	9	10
April		2			5	6	7	8	9	10
May		2				6	7	8	9	10
June		2				6	7	8		10

Each number corresponds to the step to take in that time.

1. Teach each letter to mastery, with the goal of letter automaticity. It should take a full week at the beginning of the year for each letter. As students learn how to learn a letter, you should be able to teach three letters over two weeks (1.5 per week), or even two letters per week. Even so, certain letters will take more time. Don't rush it: teach to mastery.
2. Teach one sight word a week. You can use a list but be opportunistic and teach words that would have immediate benefits for reading and writing.
3. Introduce a vowel early in the sequence and introduce the next vowel when the prior vowel is fully mastered. This takes time. Don't push it, but also don't delay. I recommend the regular sequence of Aa, Ee, Ii, Oo, Uu.
4. Teach two-letter blending (vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel).
5. Focus on identifying letters at the end and later, in the middle of words.
6. Teach the CVC (consonant-letter-consonant) blend—the threshold of real reading!
7. Teach one consonant blend or digraph per week. Exhaust the digraphs before you begin the blends.
8. Teach one word family (phonogram) per week.

9. Introduce one long vowel sound per week. Order is teacher's choice! Keep reinforcing afterward and contrast the sounds with short vowels.
10. Teach and reinforce the four reading mantras.
 - a. Look for the sandwich words in the big words.
 - b. Look for other little words in the big words.
 - c. If one sound doesn't work, try another.
 - d. Read what you know and go from there.