

Presenting the Activities – A Parent’s Guide

Learning takes time. When there is time, it takes place.

The Family

The sequence that follows outlines your interaction with the child who will be using this program to learn to read and to write. While your interaction is important for the learning of your child, equally important is the interaction of your child with every other member of your family. In so far as possible, what your child learns, every other member of your family should learn, as well.

As your son or daughter learns the 44 sounds that form the basis of the activities, every other member of your family with whom your child has daily or near daily contact should learn the sounds, as well. As you introduce, say, two and three sound blending to your child, others in the family – young and old – can share that experience, as well.

Your son or daughter’s own learning will be aided immensely if he or she has family members with whom to share the learning.

Dekodiphukan

Begin the program by reading Dekodiphukan to your child. The focus of the reading is the introduction of the 44 sounds. If you are not sure of any sound’s pronunciations, you may play the audio for any page you wish. Your child may also choose to use the Play buttons to hear the book read again and again.

Use of the Two and Three-Sound Flipbooks begins once the first few sounds have been introduced.

Two-Sound Flipbook

The Two and Three-Sound Flipbooks are to be used by you and your child together. Dekodiphukan provides the rationale for why each image represents the sound that it does. Knowing the sound connected with the image is only the first small step in learning to read. The first big step for both you and your child is learning to blend sounds into words.

You can begin using the Two-Sound Flipbook as soon as the first two sounds are introduced, or you can wait until after three or four or five sounds are known. The starting point is up to you, so long as you begin by the time you have reached Dekodiphukan’s eighth sound.

The table of contents for the Two-Sound Flipbook lists the number of sounds you and your child need to know for each page. “2” in the sounds column means that word can be blended after the first two sounds have

been introduced. “8” means the word can be blended after the eighth sound has been introduced.

Three-Sound Flipbook

Begin with the Two-Sound Flipbook. Whenever you decide your child is ready for three sound words, introduce the Three-Sound Flipbook.

If you are not sure if your child is ready for three-sound words, the easiest way to find out is to introduce the Three-Sound Flipbook to your child and see what happens. If you and your child together can manage the blending, then use the Three-Sound Flipbook along with the Two-Sound Flipbook. If your child is overwhelmed with the extra sound, then Two-Sound blending is enough for now.

As was true for the Two-Sound Flipbook, the table of contents for the Three-Sound Flipbook lists the number of sounds you and your child need to know for each page. “4” in the sounds column means that word can be blended after the first four sounds have been introduced. “8” means the word can be blended after the eighth sound has been introduced.

Booklets

You can begin using the Two-Sound Flipbook with your child once the first two sounds have been introduced. You can begin using the Three-Sound Flipbook once the fourth sound has been introduced.

You must wait to introduce your child to the Booklets until he or she knows the first eight sounds. The Booklets are similar to the Flipbooks, except that they are to be read or listened to by your child alone.

Your child reads the sounds or hear them read by pressing the play button, then flip the page to see and/or hear the word.

The triangle, circle, square, rectangle and star shapes indicate the number of sounds your child needs to know to read a booklet for that level. The white, yellow, red, blue, and so on, color-codings are simply used to tell one book from another at the same level. Plain means two-sound. Happy face means three-sound.

Reading Worksheets – Two and Three Sound Words

At the same time as you are introducing your child to the Booklets, or shortly thereafter, introduce your child to the Reading Worksheets.

The triangle, circle, square, rectangle and star codings for the Booklets match the codings for the Worksheets. When you introduce your child to a triangle-level Booklet, the triangle level of the Worksheet uses the same eight sounds.

Unlike the Booklets, the Worksheets present each sound separately and ask your child to blend the separate sounds together to form words. Use of the Booklets along with the Worksheets provided your child a continuing opportunity to hear the sounds blended (Booklets) and blend the sounds himself or herself (Worksheets).

Introducing All Five Levels

Are you to introduce your child to all five levels of two and three-sound words once you have finished the reading of Dekodiphukan and the introduction of all 44 sounds? No you are not.

You are the best judge of when your child is ready for each new level, and your child is your best judgment guide. If your child is managing the triangle level activities easily, then add the circle level. When circle is easy add the square, and so on. If two-sound blending is understood, then try three.

Conversely, if something is not yet easy or comfortable, then there is no reason to add anything new just yet.

When your child was learning to walk, you accepted every first effort as good enough for now. We don't ask a crawling child to run. We help the crawling child learn to walk well first, and we are appropriately excited by every first step.

Learning takes time. When there is time, it takes place. Allow your child to learn at his or her own pace as you enjoy all the first steps along the way.

Stamping

Once your child knows all 44 sounds, he or she can use the Stamping app to write whatever he or she wishes. Until all 44 sounds have been introduced, however, the Stamping app is for you and your child to use together.

Stamping begins when your child has been introduced to the first 8 sounds. The Stamping instructions include a downloadable list of words for you to use in teaching your child to listen for the sounds in words and stamp out the sounds heard.

When your child knows the first 8 sounds, read triangle level words from the list to your child and ask him or her to stamp them out. When 16 sounds are known, read the circle words from the list, and so on. Start with two sound words. If two is manageable, then read three sound words from the list.

While stamping begins when 8 sounds are known, if your child experiences any difficulty with eight sounds at the start, then begin with only two or three sounds. The Stamping Word List is not your only source for words. You can use the Two and Three-Sound Flipbooks as your source instead.

The table of contents for the Flipbooks lists the number of sounds your child needs to know to read each word. If you choose, you can ignore the Stamping Word List altogether, and use the Flipbook words instead.

Once all 44 sounds are known, your child is ready to begin stamping any words he or she wishes. Now, creative writing begins - see **Stamping and Creative Writing – the First Phase** below.

Until that time however, the words you dictate give your child the practice he or she needs in hearing sounds in words and stamping out what is heard.

Surrounding the Child with the Concept

We do not know exactly how, or at precisely what moment a child's mind achieves understanding, but we do know how to surround the child with the experiences that will lead to understanding.

When you taught your child to speak, you enveloped your infant child with words and meanings. You surrounded him or her with the concept of speech, knowing that your child's infant's mind would sort it out in his or her own way. You did not have to know exactly what was going on in your child's mind that caused the learning to take place. All you had to do was surround your child with language and let your child's mind do the rest.

Because you knew that learning would take place, you were patient enough to let it happen on its own. And because you knew that learning would take place, you could enjoy each little step your child took along the way – from your child's first words to the non-stop flow of words that come from your child now.

You are now teaching your child reading and writing in the same natural way. You are surrounding your child with words and their sounds. Flipbooks, Booklets, Reading Worksheets, Stamping and the activities that are to follow are all apart of this surrounding process.

Whether your child moves quickly from 8 sounds to 16 and from two-sound words to three, or needs to move more slowly through the two-sound blending process and start with fewer sounds than 8, you are creating an environment that gives your child time to learn. With time, learning always happens. It always will.

Enjoy each little step your child takes along the way – from the first few words your child learns to read and write, to the many words your child will, in his or her own time, be reading fluently and writing with great joy.

Picture Packets – Words

Picture Packets-Words (Words) is the first app that does not contain any audio clues.

The prerequisite for Words is Booklets. Each individual booklet contains the ten words and ten illustrations that will be on each Words page. When your child reads the word “tie” on the left-hand side of the page, he or she will have learned through the booklet which of the illustrations on the right-hand side represents the word “tie.”

Although Words can be introduced once your child has read the booklets for first eight sounds, whether or not you have your child begin using Words depends on your child’s readiness.

One measure of your child’s readiness is, if your child can read the booklets without using the audio assistance.

Another good measure of readiness for Words is Stamping. If your child can stamp out the two-sound words you dictate, he or she is ready for Words.

The final measure of readiness is to introduce Words to your child and see how he or she does. If your child has difficulty reading the words and matching them to the correct illustration, then allow your child to spend more time with the booklets before beginning Words again.

Before you introduce your child to Words, practice for yourself the art of sliding the words to the pictures and insuring that your finger on the word touches the picture in the manner described in the Picture Packets-Words instructions.

When you introduce your child to Words, watch to see that the word-sliding process is truly understood.

Once your child has begun working with Words, working with Worksheets and Booklets need not stop. All three apps can be used interchangeably.

How Long?

You can begin the Two-Sound Flipbook when as few as 2 sounds have been introduced, and the Three-Sound Flipbook when as few as 4 sounds are known.

Once 8 sounds are known, you can introduce your child to Booklets, Reading Worksheets, Stamping, and Picture Packets–Words. Within each app, your child can work with two and three-sound words at five different levels.

So, how long before your child is ready to move on?

No timeline is provided. The activities are meant to be a flow of events, the pacing of which changes with each child. If the activities described above can be said to represent a range of events from 'A' to 'Z', then what is important is to proceed from 'A' to 'B' well, and then to proceed equally well from 'B' to 'C'. There is no rush to get to 'Z'. Let 'Z' take care of itself. 'Z' isn't the goal. Learning is the goal.

If we are to err in the rate at which we introduce activities to our children, let us err in favor of allowing each child too much time to learn rather than too little. The more time we give our children, the more time each child has to sort out the concepts in his or her own way.

The most common observation made by people who have witnessed this program in action in classrooms is that the children quite visibly enjoy what they are doing. Part of this enjoyment exists because there is no fear of failure associated with the learning that is taking place. This is because the learning is allowed to take place at each child's natural rate, with no pressure exerted on the child to move ahead too soon. If we are patient, learning to read is as natural as learning to talk. Learning takes time. When there is time, it takes place.

How long? How much time did you give your child to learn to talk? How long? As long as it took. As long as it takes.

You and your child determine the flow of events. When you see your child has mastered one level, move on to the next. If one activity seems too hard for now, back up to an easier level and wait for what is hard to become easy over time. It always will. Your child, too, will move between the levels on his or her own. Your child will seek his or her own comfort level.

Stamping is the measure you can use to assess what your child has learned. Once your child knows all 44 sounds, your child can begin stamping out anything he or she wishes. Read what your child is stamping out. Stamping will show you your child's strengths and

weaknesses. Stamping will show you when your child is ready to move beyond two and three-sound words to the activities that come next.

Stamping and Creative Writing – the First Phase

Once your child knows all 44 sounds and has shown that he or she can hear the sounds in words and stamp them out, creative writing begins. Before all 44 sounds have been introduced your child has only used Stamping to write words from the Stamping Words List. Creative writing means writing what you want, not writing what you are told to write.

The First Phase of Creative Writing is described in detail in the Creative Writing section of The Guide.

Reading Worksheets - Phrases

When all 44 sounds have been introduced and your child is reading two and three-sound words comfortably at all five levels, introduce the heart-level Reading Worksheets. The heart-level worksheets present your child with phrases made up of from two to four words. Each word varies in length from one to four sounds.

Introduction of the heart-level worksheets parallels the introduction of creative writing in Stamping. As your child learns to stamp out words and phrases of his or her own creation, your child begins the reading of phrases, as well.

The words in the worksheet phrases do not contain audio clues for individual sound images. Your child reads the phrase to the best of his or her ability and touches the picture the phrase describes. If the correct picture is pressed, an audio of the phrase is played.

Since the audio for the phrase is present, no matter how well or with how much difficulty your child reads the phrase, a correct reading of the phrase is just a touch away. There is, in essence, a reading tutor for each phrase.

Picture Packets – Phrases

Wait to introduce the Picture Packets-Phrases (Phrases) until your child can read the heart level worksheets. The difference between the Phrases and the Reading Worksheets is the absence of audio clues.

Once again, the best assessment of your child's readiness for an activity is your child himself or herself. If your child can read the heart level worksheets, introduce the Phrases and see how well your child manages the reading of a page or two.

What you see your child do is all the assessment you need. If your child can read the phrases, or at least the majority of them, then he or she is

ready for Phrases. If reading the phrases is difficult, then allow your child more time with creative writing before introducing Phrases at a later time.

Ready to Transition

When an infant learns to talk, there are two phases. The first phase is when the infant is learning what words are and how to say them. First words like Ma or wa wa (or whatever other set of sounds might be used to mean “water”) are major steps along the way to making sense of the sounds that surround the infant. And we, as parents, delight in and encourage each and every step along the way.

Once the toddler can speak, which means once he or she understands what words are and how to say them, the second phase begins. Phase two is when the speaking child simply adds more and more words to his or her vocabulary, refines his or her speaking skill and learns to speak in whole sentences.

In phase one, the child learns to speak. In phase two, the speaking child adds vocabulary and speaking skills.

In the Reading Program, hearing the sounds in words for both reading and writing is phase one. Transitioning is phase two.

Transitioning means learning to write letters for the sounds. In phase two, the child refines his or her reading and writing skills.

The challenges for an infant learning to talk are learning that sounds have meaning, what the meanings are, and how to accurately reproduce these same sounds. Once the infant has overcome these challenges and understands language, learning more words is limited only by the number of words there are to learn.

We adults think the hard part of learning to read with the sounds will be the transition from the sounds to the letters used to spell these sounds. In reality, when your child is ready to transition from the sounds to more traditional letters, the hard part is long past.

Creative Writing is your measure of your child’s readiness to transition to traditional letters. When your child can read the stories he or she has written with the sound images, he or she is ready to transition to writing the stories with letters instead.

When your child can hear the sounds in words, stamp out these sound-images, and read what has been stamped out, your child is already a reader and a writer. The next step is just a formality. Transitioning

simply means showing your child a more traditional way to record the reading and the writing your child already knows how to do.

Decoding Chart

The Decoding Chart is the first step in the transition process. While two different versions of the Decoding Chart are available in app form, these apps are more useful at the start for you than for your child. The Decoding Chart apps are not practical for your child to use once letters are to be written for the sounds because when your child needs a Decoding Chart for writing spellings, he or she will be using the Worksheet app at the same time.

Double-clicking the iPad's home button while using the Writing Worksheet app will give your child access to a Decoding Chart app. Double-clicking again will return your child to the Writing Worksheet app. However, while double-clicking between worksheets and the Decoding Chart is possible, it is much better to simply have an actual Decoding Chart available to use.

The instruction page for the Decoding Chart apps contains a link to a downloadable and printable copy of the Decoding Chart. You can print out as many copies of the downloaded Chart as you wish. This printed copy is what your child should use.

Writing Worksheets

The Writing Worksheets are actually the Reading Worksheets with spelling codes added in. Using worksheets your child has already read successfully permits your child to focus all of his or her attention now on the writing.

You will need to teach your child how to use the Decoding Chart to decide the letters to write on the worksheet pages. Before you teach your child, you will have to learn yourself. Your four quick lessons are included in the instructions for the Writing Worksheets. The Decoding Chart apps also include practice pages for your child to use.

As was true for these same worksheets earlier, triangle level means only the first 8 sounds are used. These same first 8 sounds are also the top row on the left-hand side of the Decoding Chart. When your child is looking for spellings for the triangle level Writing Worksheets at both the two and three-sound levels, he or she need only look in that one row.

Once your child has written letters for all the two and three-sound triangle level Writing Worksheets, two and three-sound circle worksheets are next, followed by two and three-sound square worksheets, and so on.

The Writing Worksheets use the same sequence of sound introduction as did the Reading Worksheets. This time the sound sequence is used to acquaint your child with the Decoding Chart one new eight-sound row at a time.

If you choose to print out a copy of the Decoding Chart for your child to use, you might also consider cutting up copies of the chart and giving your child only that part of the Chart actually needed for the level of Worksheets for which he or she is writing letters. An example of this can be seen in the Chart-Levels app.

Pressing the small 8 sounds button on the Chart-Levels Decoding Chart shows just the triangle or first row of the Chart. Pressing the 16 sounds button shows circle level sounds and their spellings, and so on. You can use Chart-Levels as your cutting guide.

Picture Packets - Transition

You can introduce Picture Packets-Transition (Transition) to your child at the same time as he or she begins the Writing Worksheets. The geometric codes for the Transition pages have no meaning. The Transition pages at all levels assume your child knows all 44 sounds.

You might wonder why Transition is introduced while your child is only learning the spellings for a few sounds at a time. A child who is just beginning the transitioning process with the Writing Worksheets can read the Transition phrases using just the sounds. As your child advances through the Writing Worksheets, he or she will be able to read more and more of the Transition phrases using the letters above the sounds. The increasing use of letters in place of sounds occurs naturally, as more sound-spellings are introduced.

Sightword Worksheets

Once your child has passed through all five levels of the Writing Worksheets you can introduce the Sightword Worksheets.

The Sightword Worksheets provide your child with a tremendous amount of practice with the Decoding Chart. In fact, after successfully passing all the Sightword Worksheet tests, your child will have internalized many of the Decoding Chart's spellings and will only be using the Chart for sounds with multiple spellings.

The Sightword Worksheets also prepare the way for the second phase of creative writing. Your child will now be able to write a number of basic words quickly and correctly: is, and, not, at, has, much, when, how, and so on.

Sightword Worksheets are meant for your child to do alone. However, as is explained in the Worksheet instructions, it will be necessary for you to check your child's tests.

To introduce your child to the Sightword Worksheets, see the Instructions subsection of the Sightword Worksheets Instruction page.

Stamping and Creative Writing – the Second Phase

Once your child has completed the Sightword worksheets (or even as your child is working on the Sightword Worksheets, if you prefer) he or she can begin the second phase of creative writing. In the second phase, your child writes letters for the sounds in the stories he or she has already written.

Before your child can write letters for the sounds, you will need to print out his or her stories. The sound-images for the stories your child has written allow enough space between rows for writing letters.

If you have the time and confidence enough in your own spelling ability, you can read each story in advance of printing it out and add in a silent letter stamp wherever a silent letter stamp should appear. Silent letters appear in the words “comb” and “walk”, for example. Once you have printed out a story, you can write numbers beneath those sounds that need spellings indicated.

If time or confidence do not permit, you can simply print out each story with no silent letters indicated and no codings added in advance. Your child can then use his or her Decoding Chart and sight word knowledge to write spellings for all the words. First spellings can be used for every word your child has not already learned to spell correctly from the Sightword Worksheets or the Writing Worksheets or Transition apps.

You can then sit with your child and review his or her writing for spellings that need to be changed. Learning is something children do. It is something we, as parents, do as well.

Your child can use his or her Decoding Chart to write the spellings for the word “won”. However, the Chart is not at all useful for writing letters for the sounds in the word “one”. “One” is an Outlaw Word. Before you begin the editing process with your child, acquaint yourself with the concept of **Outlaw Words** (see the Outlaw Word button in the menu bar above).

Picture Packet - Vowels

Once you see that your child can read Picture Packets-Transition phrases well, and you can see your child is reading these phrases with the letters even more than with the sounds, introduce the Picture

Packets-Vowels. Picture Packets-Vowels present your child words to read with only a sound or two provided as a reading hint. By now, a hint will be all your child needs.

Stamping and Creative Writing – the Third Phase

When your child can write letters for the sounds from the Stamping app, your child can also write letters for the sounds in his or her head. As your child wrote his or her stories in Stamping, your child thought of the words to write and then wrote these words using images for the sounds. Writing letters for the sounds in words is nearly the same thing. The only difference is, whereas each sound had only one image representing it, sounds written with letters may have more than one way to be spelled.

This “more than one way to be spelled” difficulty is one of the reasons why your child first learned to read and write just with sounds. Now that your child is a reader and a writer and has the Decoding Chart as a guide to knowing the different ways some sounds find to be spelled, what was once a hindrance to learning is no longer so. Just as an infant who has mastered speaking is ready for more words, a child who has mastered reading and writing is ready to read and write in a greater variety of ways.

Once your child has transitioned out of the program, learning to read and to write does not end, just as once an infant learns to talk, learning to talk does not end.

For the third phase of creative writing, all of the Reading Program’s apps except one are obsolete. Now, all you do is give your child all the tools he or she needs to keep on writing and reading.

For writing, this means the Decoding Chart as an app or as a printed page, a computer word processor, or paper and pencil, and continual encouragement to write. Writing stories. Writing letters. Writing Diaries. Writing e-mails sent to relatives. Writing anything at all.

For reading this means books and magazines and notes written around the house. Closed captioning on TV. Reading cereal boxes. Reading roadside billboards when in the car. Reading road signs aloud. Wherever words are is an opportunity to read.

Opportunities to read are everywhere. Opportunities to write abound as well. Children who have learned to read and to write are at a starting point, not at learning’s end.