guesses the object or gives up. The name of the object can then be added in the book. Another way to play is to choose a word in the book by saying "I spy a word on this page that ends with a ___" (K sound, for example). Your child then searches for the word. Remember to give your child chances to spy objects and words that you have to search for.

✓ Add an interesting word heard at school.
✓ Choose a letter sound that your child is working with at school, then put together a list of words that begin with that sound. Have your child choose favorite words to add to the book.

Summary

The suggestions and activities found in this Guide are intended to help your child have positive reading and writing experiences together with you. Children have a natural inclination to participate in activities which they believe are important to adults, and for which they are rewarded by adults. If children enjoy their initial efforts to read and write, and you support these efforts, they will be better prepared to hone their skills through repetitive work in later years.

Read and write joyfully with your child at every opportunity. And, use WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE to help your child enjoy learning our language.

For Grades 1 and 2

Words I use when I write

Help At Home Guide

by

Alana Trisler & Patrice Howe Cardiel

Experts in Intervention for Over 50 Years

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Introduction

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Children use WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE to create a personal spelling guide by writing in words that are important to them. In addition to helping them with their spelling, WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE is also a useful aid in the development of children’s vocabulary, alphabetizing skills, and understanding of phonics (the relationship between written words and the sounds they represent). Although word definitions are not a part of WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE, the book is a logical step in the understanding and use of dictionaries.

Children become readers and writers gradually, so this booklet includes a brief overview of language development that will help you make the best possible use of WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE. We also explain why and how to read with your child, because enjoyable reading experiences at home are a vital part of the learning process. The final section of this Guide contains suggestions for helping your child use WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE at home.

Your child’s teacher may have other suggestions for using the book at home, too. And you and your child may discover new ways to use the book together. Remember that WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE is not a workbook, and learning to read and write should be an enjoyable experience.

The only rule for using WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE is that every word added is to be spelled correctly. This is necessary because your child will be using the book as a reference and should not be given incorrect information. In some cases, you may need to write a new word on a piece of paper, then let your child copy it into the book.

There are no other directions for you or your child to follow. WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE is not a workbook, so there are no exercises to be done and then graded.

You can, however, use the book as part of activities that will help your child read and write more fluently. We have provided some suggestions that are meant to be fun as well as educational. Remember, if at any time either you or your child feels stressed or pressured by the following activities, it is time to stop and do something else. Return to the activities when you both feel fresh and relaxed. And keep in mind that the main purpose of the book and the related activities is that your child record words that are important to him or to her.

WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE Activities

✓ Become familiar with the words in the book. Have your child pick a letter of the alphabet, then read the word list for that letter.
✓ When your child asks how to spell a word, suggest that he or she look it up in the book. If it is not there, add it.
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What To Do When Reading Isn't Fun  
For A Struggling Reader

Young readers usually possess a willingness to read. But, if reading is a struggle for your child, he or she may not want to read to you or with you. No one likes to keep repeating a difficult task.

The preceding DOs and DON'Ts in the How To Read With Your Child section are basic guidelines that meet any reader's needs. A struggling reader will probably need extra encouragement and support. As he or she may find little reward in poring over the printed page, a parent needs to work carefully with such a child. Here are some guidelines for working with struggling readers:

✓ Read to a struggling reader instead of asking that he or she read to you.
✓ Allow your child to choose material that he or she finds interesting. Yes, even comic books!
✓ Expose the struggling reader to all levels of reading difficulty, all types of literature, and all types of books (picture books, chapter books, easy-to-read books, etc.). Be sure to include some material that is near your child's reading level, so your child can later give it a try without you.
✓ Suggest that a struggling reader read a well-known picture book to a younger, non-reading child. This is much less threatening than reading to an adult or a peer.
✓ Remember that the most important task of any reader is to create meaning for printed text. Don't get too caught up in sounding out words. Encourage educated guesses about unknown words from the context and/or picture clues.

Using WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE Together

When leafing through WORDS I USE WHEN I WRITE, you will see word lists and blank writing lines for adding new words. As your child fills in the blank lines with new words, the book will become a personal record of its owner's development, interests and experiences.

New words children add may come from letters they write or receive, books you read together, a grocery list, or a sign for the bedroom door. Names of friends and family members can be added in a special section near the back of the book.

A Note About Language --  
And Reading And Writing Development

Language is our basic form of communication. Newborn infants immediately respond to their parents' voices, and many children are responding to the meaning of words by the end of their first year.

As children grow and develop, the power of their own words becomes more evident to them. When you stop what you are doing, make eye contact with children, and listen to what they are saying, you are supporting the development of their thought processes and their ability to express themselves.

At age three, children have a speaking vocabulary of about 900 words. By this time they are also beginning to realize that the printed word is part of communication. Once they have reached pre-school age, children are experimenting with reading and writing simultaneously. It is at this time that most children begin to ask "What does this say?", scribble their own grocery lists, and pretend to read.

As a parent, you support their efforts when you look at and discuss their scribbles and artwork. Reading and discussing books with children are also very important, as early reading activities occur spontaneously when children see reading material in the home. Writing on walls, floors and refrigerators is part of this process, too, and parents will want to switch children from these surfaces to paper without dampening the children's enthusiasm for the writing process.

To further encourage children to read and write, parents should praise children's initial efforts and try to make such efforts enjoyable. When young children are told that their spelling is incorrect, or that their letters are not properly formed, their natural enthusiasm diminishes. Developing penmanship and spelling skills come after children have started to enjoy writing. The same holds true for learning what each word means and how it is pronounced, which should naturally follow the enjoyment of reading.

Young children want to communicate, and school-age children are eager to become proficient at reading and writing. Nurturing this enthusiasm is one of the most important ways to help a child learn to read and write.
The Importance Of Reading With Your Child

"Mommy, will you read me a story?"

As a parent, you may often hear this request, or you may long to hear it. Either way, you realize the importance of a child's quest for information and enjoyment through the printed page. You want your child to be stimulated by colorful pictures and the language of stories, and to grow into an adult who reads for sheer pleasure, as well as out of necessity. How can you cultivate this kind of reader?

First of all, you must read. Children are acutely aware of what the significant adults in their lives value. If your child sees you sit down daily to read, he or she will realize that reading is an important activity worthy of your time. The same holds true for writing -- whether letters, notes, lists or anything else.

You should also read to your child every day. By doing so, you communicate to your child that reading is a social activity you value, and that you want to share this important activity with a very important person! When you discuss what you have read together, your child comes to the realization that readers form opinions about books, and that not every book is loved equally.

In addition, your child needs opportunities to choose some of the books you read together. This allows your child to participate fully in the reading process. Not every choice will be a good one, but children learn to choose books by trial and error, so a few abandoned books are to be expected.

As children become more proficient readers, your reading time together may change. You may want to add a family reading time during which each family member reads his or her own choice of material. And as children begin to obtain information from a wider variety of materials -- such as game rules or scout handbooks -- the reading of these materials should also be encouraged.

Children will only do what they have time to do. If your child is allowed to watch several hours of television every day, there will be relatively little time left for reading together. We suggest turning off the television set and cuddling up to read a good story together.

How To Read With Your Child

DOs

✔ Do enjoy the time spent reading together.
✔ Do read to your child at least once a day. (More if you can manage it!)
✔ Do pick a time when your child has your undivided attention.
✔ Do allow your child to select the book, but also feel free to make your own selections occasionally. This lets your child know that you have favorites, too!
✔ Do let your child explore the book before you begin reading.

DON'Ts

✔ Don't continue reading when your child loses interest.
✔ Don't go overboard with questioning. A discussion at home should not be a test.
✔ Don't refuse to re-read an old favorite. Young children begin to understand print by memorizing a book they hear repeatedly, and older children gain confidence in their ability to read a book independently as they hear it over and over.

Additional DOs For Family Reading Time

✔ Do make sure every family member has his or her selection(s) ready before reading time begins.
✔ Do sit down and read material that you are interested in.
✔ Do stop to answer a question or provide help if your child requests it.
✔ Do allow your child to rest and think during reading time. Taking a break from reading to rest and think is important for all readers.
✔ Do allow your child to have several books available and to change his or her choice.

Additional DON'Ts For Family Reading Time

✔ Don't allow outside interruptions to make family reading time an inconsistent experience.
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Some Questions To Ask When Discussing A Book

Before you read:

✔ "What do you already know about ___?" (the book or its theme)

Children benefit when they recall previous knowledge about a book's subject matter. This helps them make more appropriate guesses about unfamiliar words, and it helps them make predictions about the story.
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