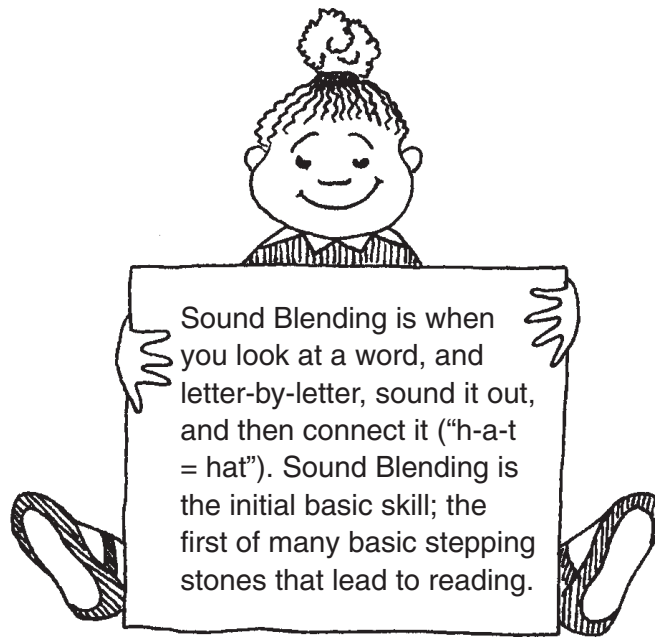


Chapter 6

Sound Blending: A Stepping Stone To Reading

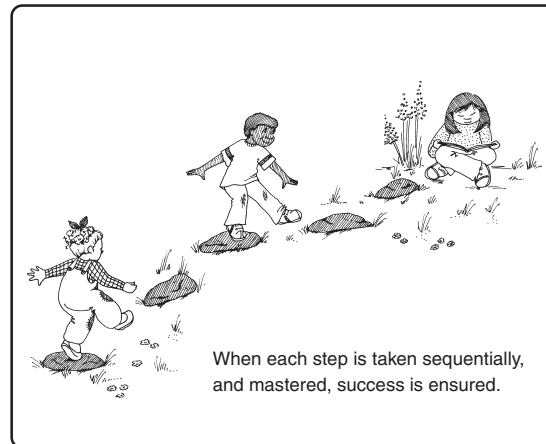


Pre-Sound Blending

(Read this Chapter before trying to Sound Blend, read or spell words.)

The different reinforcement activities learned have been created to teach children at different developmental stages. Learning the Shapes, Sounds and Signals of the alphabet is the first stage; putting them together to read and spell words is the next. Your child *must* be ready for this very important stage. Please don't rush it. You will know if s/he is **not** ready by your child's reaction. S/he may start whining, fidgeting, complaining, or appear bored. Stop and wait until a later time. When your child is ready, s/he will be excited over another new thing to learn!

The shapes and sounds of the letters must be learned “backwards and forwards” before attempting to teach her/him how to read (as opposed to memorizing whole words). That’s why we emphasize “over-learning” the alphabet, through Sounds and Signals. Even then, your child may need more time on just the alphabet. S/he might not be quite ready to put the letters together to form words. Give plenty of playful practice on the “a – z’s.” The Animals make it fun.



But, if you think that s/he is ready, you may begin the process of sound blending which Zoo-phonics approaches through pre-sound blending and phonemic awareness activities. *We ask that you go through the steps sequentially to insure success. If they are to be beneficial, they must be done consistently, yet playfully. Have fun!*

Vowels, the Hardest Workers

When the children are very familiar with the Zoo-phonics Animals from “a – z,” and the letter Shapes, Sounds and Signals, the following conversation can take place:

“Children, did you know that five of our Animal friends work harder than any of the others?” They are called “vowels.”

Pull from your *Animal Picture* or *Merged Letter Cards* (#1 or #2), the five vowels to display on the table or floor in front of you. Tell your child that these five are called vowels and are the hardest workers.

Practice the Signals and short Sounds of the vowels (a-e-i-o-u). Do this in a rhythmic fashion several times (and in the days that follow). Tell your child that the **consonants** are all the other letters!)

Now ask, “Who are the hardest workers?” Your child should respond by naming Allie, Ellie, Inny, Olive and Umber.

Now ask, “Do you know how I know that they are the hardest workers?” If your child indicates that s/he doesn’t know, tell her/him this:

“Every word in the English language has at least one vowel in each syllable (“y” and “w” are sometimes considered vowels). There are five of them to get the job done, and 21 consonants to help. How would you like to be the one out of the whole family to do all the work in the home while we played games? I wonder if the vowels ever feel this way?”

Prove it by displaying a sheet of paper with words printed on it. Words written on the small chalkboard will do.) Show her/him how to “Circle the Vowels” by drawing a circle around each vowel in the word.

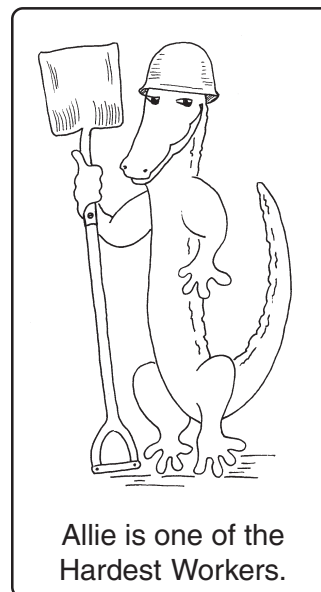
box sand animals

Have your child repeat the words “vowels” and “consonants.” Say the words several times and visually show her/him examples, using the *Animal/Letter Cards*.

Discussions like this help children understand the constructs of print. From this, your child will understand that a vowel (or two) needs to go in every syllable (between the consonants) as s/he writes. S/he will then be more cognizant to listen for the letter sounds that s/he needs, and write them.

1. Try these activities:

- a. Write the alphabet on the little chalkboard (provided in the Kit) or paper. Ask your child to put a circle around each of the vowels. Signal and Sound these “Hard Workers” together.



Now underline the consonants. Discuss that a consonant is necessary in words also. They usually are on either side of the vowels in words. (Point out the consonants in various words written on the chalkboard.)

- b. Write many consonant-vowel-consonant words on the chalkboard or paper. Circle the vowel in each word, underline the consonants and Signal.
2. Print 20 CVC words on a piece of paper. Your child is to circle the vowel in each word and underline the consonants. When this activity is complete, Signal out the words and discuss each one. Use the Word List on Page 47, 50 and 61.



**T
I
P**

You may want to purchase the *Zoo-phonics® Activity Worksheets Level A* packet for more “Hardest Worker” activities, puppets, mazes, games and handwriting practice.

Three Activities that Lead to Sound Blending

Now that your child has learned the Shapes, Sounds and Signals of the alphabet, beginning the process of **Pre-Sound Blending** is the next step. The following Activities will help to prepare your child eventually for more advanced Sound Blending skills. Use the *Alphabet Cards* (Sets #1 or #2 both sides) for these activities. Many of the Phonemic Awareness Activities found in Chapter 4 are great sound blending warm-ups.

Play “One Sound, One Signal”

If the child still needs to repeat the Sounds when going through the Animals (“allie alligator, “a-a-a”), s/he is not quite ready to begin Sound Blending. (For instance, you cannot say “c-c-c-a-a-a-t-t-t” and get “cat.”)

This next activity will help ready your child for pre-sound blending.

Display the *Merged Animal/Letter Cards* from “a – z.” Together with your child, go through the alphabet doing only one Sound and Signal, **not** multiple Sounds and Signals. Example: “a-b-c-d-e-f-g-h-i-j-k-l-m-n-o-p-q-r-s-t-u-v-w-x-y-z, *not* “a-a-a, b-b-b, c-c-c.”

Play “What Word Am I Signaling?”

This is an auditory/vocal (ears and voice) activity. Slowly say a simple word to your child, separating the sounds. (Use familiar Vowel-Consonant (VC) and Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) words. See Page 47, 50 and 61 for a list of words.) Your child will then connect it to the word. Here’s an example: you say: “d-ooooooooo-g,” giving the Sounds and Signals. Your child puts the word together and says, “dog.” You say, “f-ooooooooo-g” giving the Sounds and Signals; the child says, “fog.”

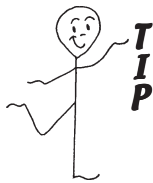
Stay with one word family at first: (“og”) dog, fog, log, etc.; (“at”) bat, cat, mat, etc.; or (“it”) pit, bit, sit, etc. Once s/he has the idea, you may skip from word family to word family.

At first, you may have to repeat the sounds several times, slowly, until what you are doing becomes clear. Play this game often. Have the whole family play. Soon your child will be taking a turn leading the “What Am I Signaling?” Game. This is a great game “in the restaurant or in the car,” as well as in the home.

The object of this lesson is to train the child to hear the individual letter sounds of a word “broken apart,” and then put them together again. The Sounds and Signals are important.

Here are some other words and word families (in parentheses) for your use:

(“ad”) bad, dad, had, mad; (“ag”) bag, tag, wag; (“am”) am, jam, ham; (“an”) can, man, fan; (“ed”) bed, fed, red; (“eg”) beg, leg, peg; (“en”) hen, men, ten; (“et”) bet, get, jet; (“id”) did, hid, kid; (“ig”) big, dig, pig; (“in”) fin, pin, tin; (“ip”) dip, sip, lip; (“ix”) fix, mix, six; (“ob”) job, rob, sob; (“od”) cod, nod, rod; (“op”) cop, hop, mop; (“ot”) cot, got, hot; (“ub”) cub, rub, tub; (“ug”) bug, dug, hug; (“um”) gum, hum, sum; (“un”) fun, run, sun; (“up”) cup, sup, pup; (“ut”) but, cut, hut, etc.



**T
I
P**

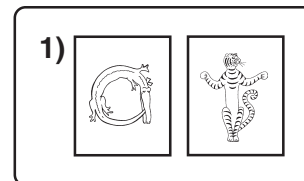
- The “Make It Say” Game may be used with the *Animal Picture Cards* or
- *Merged Animal/Letter Cards* even before the introduction to Lowercase Letters.

Practice the “Make It Say” Game (The easy version)

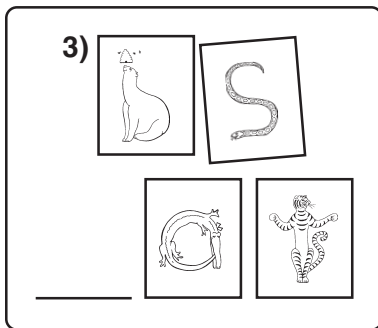
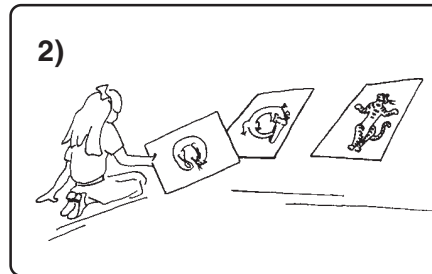
Sound Blending is developmental. Not every child is ready to begin Sound Blending, even though s/he may know the alphabet very well. A child may be successful in breaking apart the word “cat” (for example: “c-a-t”), but may have difficulty “closing” or connecting the word: your child may say “c-a-t,” and may only remember the “_at,” rather than “c-a-t = cat.”

Here is a five-step activity that will insure Sound Blending success. Remember that you must make it playful! If a mistake has been made, correct it gently by demonstrating Sound and Signal. Since this is a reinforcement activity, it is important not to rush.

Step One: First, pull from the set of *Merged Animal/Letter Cards* any two-letter words (ad, am, at, if, up, an, it, in, us, as, is, on). Place the two Cards together to make a two-letter word. (Example: the “allie” and “timothy” Cards.) Help your child to Sound, Signal and Connect the word “a-t” = “at.”

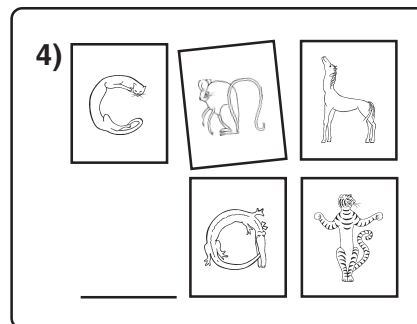


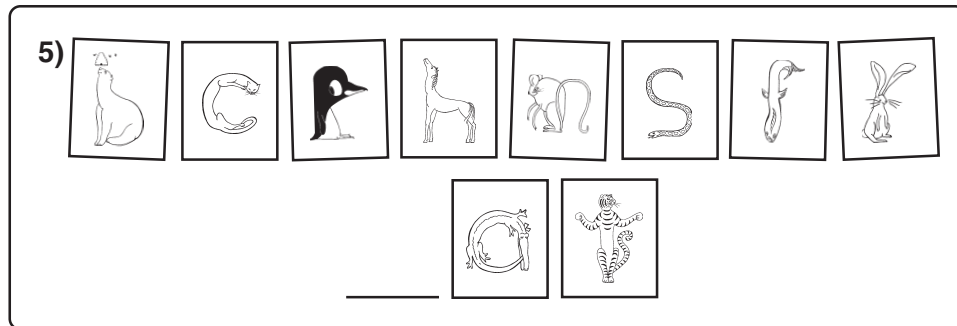
Step Two: When your child has practiced and mastered Step One sufficiently (giving Sound and Signal, and Connecting the word), display a Card that builds this two-letter word into the three-letter word. (Example: “at” becomes “cat.”) Ask, “Can you Make It Say, ‘c-a-t = cat’?” (As you say this, give Sound and Signal. Really emphasize the initial consonant sound.) Your child responds by placing the “catina” Card to the left of “a-t.” Together, Sound, Signal and Connect the word “c-a-t = cat.”



Step Three: When your child has mastered Step Two, repeat the exercise, but this time display two Cards from which to build a three-letter word; for example, display the “b” and “s” Cards. Ask, “Can you Make It Say, ‘b - a - t = bat’?” The child then makes a choice between the “b” Card and the “s” Card, and places it to the left of “a-t” to make it say “b-a-t.” Now say, “Make It Say, ‘s-a-t.’” The child will choose the “s” Card. Together give Sound and Signal, and Connect the word “s-a-t.”

Step Four: Now display three Cards from which to choose that can build three-letter words using the “at” family.





Step Five: Finally, you will display many Cards from which to choose that can build three-letter words using the “at” family, and then going to other word families. (Example: “op,” “it,” “an,” “ad,” “ut,” “up,” “et,” “ag” and “ad” families). Always Sound, Signal, and Connect it into a word.

Remember that the thing that makes this different from Sound Blending is that you are giving a strong Sound and Signal, which is prompting your child. You are showing her/him which letter to choose. Example: “Make it Say, ‘c-a-t = cat’?” In time, you will just call out the word and your child will determine which Letter Card to choose.

Try another word family and another sequence for the “Make It Say” Game: Display the *Merged Animal/Letter Cards* and finally the *Lowercase Letter Cards*. “Make It Say, ‘e-n = en’.” Your child will choose the correct letters and give Sound, Signal and Connect. Say, “Make It Say, ‘t-e-n = ten’.” Your child will pull down “t,” place it next to “en,” and then give Sound, Signal and Connect the word. Go through the sequence: “e-n,” “t-e-n,” “d-e-n,” “p-e-n,” then, “p-i-n,” “p-i-t,” “p-i-g,” “j-i-g.” We have changed beginning, middle and ending letters.

Some parental secrets to success:

- 1) As your young child is sound blending, keep your finger on the letter that your child is looking for (or struggling with). At the same time, keep **sustaining** the sounds. Repeat the sound if necessary. Your child will eventually hear the sound and make the connection.
- 2) Use each newly sound-blended and spelled word in a sentence. This gives the child not only meaning but a reason behind the activity.
- 3) You can add an “s” to nouns making them plural, then put the words into sentences each time.

- 4) Whether spelling and reading words with the *Animal Letter Cards*, the *Animal Alphabet Grids*, or the *Magnets*, make sure your child always knows where to start. We always go from left to right in the English language. Place a marker of some sort on the carpet, table or *Magnet Board* (use one of the stars), which will help her/him learn where to start spelling the word. If you are playing the “Make It Say...Game,” you will have placed two letters on the table to start with. To make a word, the child has to choose one letter from several letters. S/he will have to know where to place the letter! After s/he gets really good at this, change the middle letter and the ending letter!



TIP

.....
 : Be sure to play the “Make It Say Game” with Inny Inchworm, Activity #5 on the :
 : *Read and Spell With Zoo-phonics* CD ROM :

Let’s Try Sound Blending



NOTE

.....
 : This section is for children who have gained some experience with phonemic :
 : awareness and pre-sound blending activities. They can now take more :
 : responsibility for sound blending. :

Remember that in the *easy version* of the “Make It Say...” Game, the parent breaks apart each word, giving a strong Sound and Signal to prompt and support the child. In Sound Blending, the child has the skills to independently decode words. They are still “sound blending” (which is not “on sight” reading as yet), but are more independent. We use the phrase “Make It Say...” whether it is Pre-Sound Blending or Sound Blending. It means to change it to another word (bat to hat). The “Make It Say...” Game is an activity that leads the child into Sound Blending, then reading and spelling.

Activities

Play the “Make It Say...” Game (The challenging version).

Call out “at” (or any word family). The child selects one of the Sets of *Animal Letter Cards* to make that word and places them in order. Now ask, “Can you Make It Say, ‘pat’?” The child selects the “p” and places it to the left of “at.” Did s/he Sound,

Signal and Connect?” Use the words from the lists on Page 47, 50 and 61. Now say, “Can you make it say ‘sat’?”

Choose the Letters to Form Words

Display one of the Sets of *Animal Letter Cards*. Call out the CVC word “pan,” for instance. Your child will select the *Lowercase Letter Cards* to make that word, and place them in order. S/he will then go from left to right, letter by letter, giving Sound and Signal and Connecting the letters into a word. Your child is really Sound Blending. S/he can read and spell!

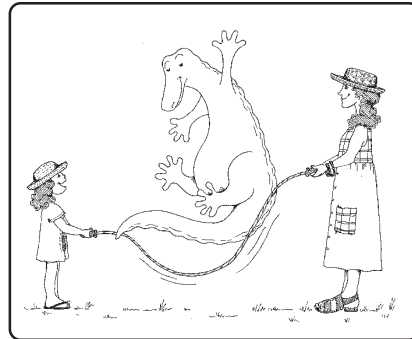
Here’s another sequence: “pat” to “pit” to “pin” to “pen” to “pan” to “man” to “men” to “mint.” Did s/he get “mint?” That word has a blend in it (“nt”).

Let’s Read

Choose three letters that form a word. If the child can read it immediately, great! If not, please encourage him or her to Signal, Sound then close (say) the word. That is also great!

Try An Unscramble!

Choose three letters (*Lowercase Letters* or *Merged Animal/Letters*) to make a CVC word. Scramble them. Now call out the word. Your child is to Sound, Signal and Connect, and then move the Cards in the right order to form a word.



Use Books!

Spell words from books using one of the sets of Cards. Spread out the Cards in front of your child. Now, reading a favorite book, call out words you know s/he can decode. They are to use the Cards to spell the words.

To extend the level of difficulty, ask your child to spell a more challenging word S/he is to choose the appropriate Cards to form the word. Now, your child probably will not spell the word correctly, but watch to see how many correct letters s/he hears and uses in the word. Give a lot of praise, and then supply any missing letters. Replace the incorrect ones. Now, read the word together. (It may have phonemic concepts you have not used yet!) Give another round of praise. S/he is learning!

Try this: Spell a harder word with the cards. Now have your child read the word. Encourage Signaling. Help when needed. Harder words help your child to challenge and develop his or her skills.