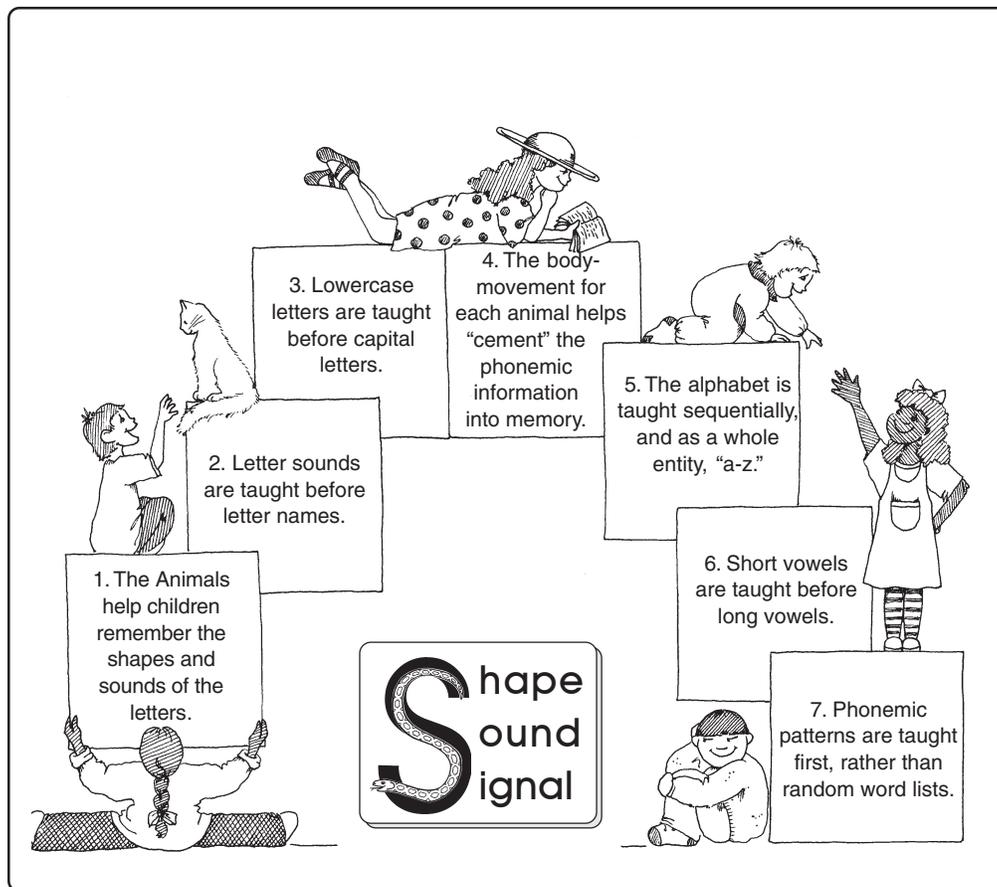


Getting Started

The Essences of Zoo-phonics

(Developing a clear understanding of the “why’s and how’s”)



Essences of Zoo-phonics, continued

Learning to read, spell and write should be painless and stress-free. Zoo-phonics is committed to joyful learning. Here's how it is done:

An Animal theme is used because it is universal and because children relate readily to animals. The configuration of the letter is remembered in association with a picture of the animal. The sound comes through the initial letter of the Animal Name. A body "Signal" is given to mimic each Animal Character. Each Zoo-phonics Animal becomes a friend and a tool for the child to use in developing reading, spelling and writing skills. Here's how:

1. Children first see the Shapes of the Lowercase Letters through the Shapes of the Animals, a b c.
2. The Sounds of the Letters are taught through the Names of the Animals ("allie alligator" = "a, a, a"), ("bubba bear" = "b, b, b"), ("catina cat" = "c, c, c").
3. Because children wiggle naturally, a Body Movement (called a Signal) is given to each letter that relates directly to the Animal, locking the Shapes and Sounds into memory. Allie Alligator opens and closes her jaws as she smiles, Catina Cat washes her face with her paw, Bubba Bear reaches up to the honey hive, etc.



Thus, *the eyes, ears, mouth and large muscles provide the vehicle to access information.* Zoo-phonics encourages the child's natural tendency to wiggle and to express her/himself, channeling it all for learning. Children learn by touching and doing, and Zoo-phonics gives them this outlet!

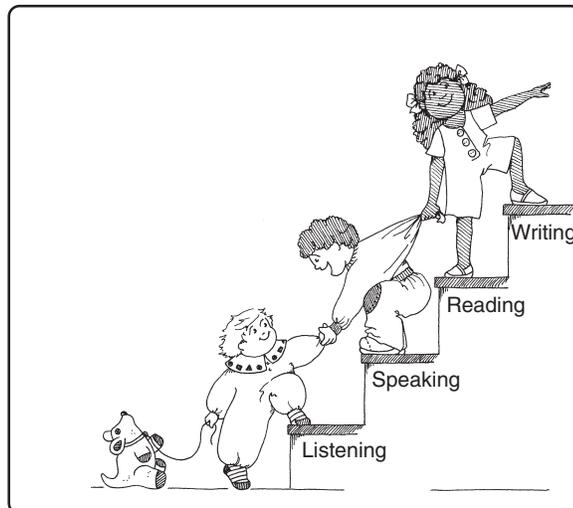
You'll also notice that we don't teach capital letters and letter names right away. When we read, capital letters are used only 5% of the time. We read in sounds, not letter names! Teaching these concepts first can actually delay the reading process! (More on this later.)

The Hierarchy of Learning

In Zoo-phonics, we teach the phases of the language process through the concept of "The Hierarchy of Learning" (also called "The Acquisition of Language"). These stages are first listening, then speaking, reading and writing. The concrete methodology of Zoo-phonics follows these stages and connects them all together.

If an infant's first steps in acquiring language (which lead eventually to reading, spelling and writing) are listening and then speaking, you already have your tools at hand! Playing with the alphabet through Signals (using those large muscles for memory) as well as their sounds, memorizing nursery rhymes and simple poems, talking and discovering reading together, and oh so much more, prepares the soil and plants the seeds for reading and writing skills that your child will need soon.

Remember that each child is in her/his own developmental time and space. The phases of learning can be supported, but not hurried.



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Zoo-phonics teaches the sequence of learning according to the natural development of the child: listening first, and then speaking, reading and writing. Zoo-phonics uses the language that the child has already developed, and connects it to the sounds of the alphabet.

Watch how babies acquire language. They listen, and then mimic sounds they hear. They respond to the speech patterns of the family. They then begin to connect these sounds. Words begin to form and are used over and over again, and at the same time new ones are added.

When a parent reads to a child, the child watches carefully. Mommy and Daddy look at those funny marks on the page and say words that tell a story. The child becomes aware that those marks on the page mean something. Sooner or later, the child will hold a book open and will make up things as if s/he were reading.

The same thing happens with writing. Mom, Dad or an older sibling write, so the child begins to make squiggles on paper that often have meaning to her/him. The reading and writing process has begun! Through Zoo-phonics, due to the body movements called "Signals," reading and spelling skills develop at the same time, because they are taught as part of the same process. It won't be long before your child will actually be reading and spelling small but important words!



Scope and Sequence

In Zoo-phonics, phonemic skills (for both reading and writing) are presented in the order of phonetic difficulty and frequency of usage. We firmly believe that learning is developmental and that information must be taught from basic to more complex, from concrete to abstract. (Would we teach three-place carrying before we teach addition facts?) We advise that you follow the sequence found in this Parent Guide. We have carefully analyzed the phonemes and words used most often in students' speech, reading, and writing and have presented them to you in this order in this *Zoo-phonics® Zoo-Parent Guide*.

The following text offers a Scope and Sequence of phonemic concepts and grammar skills that are important for your child's development and readiness for school. This list is by no means complete, or is it set in concrete. The are suggestive benchmarks.

This Scope and Sequence will help you know when (approximately) to present certain learning tasks.

It will also give you a picture of what you can help your child with and will also help when your child is in school. You can then be in the "driver's seat" at parent conferences, when checking your child's school and homework, and at report card time.

Preschool

1. Read aloud poems and stories to your child. Through this, develop basic concepts of print such as directionality, one-to-one correspondence of sounds to words, and relating speech to reading.
2. Develop cognitive and critical thinking skills through reading aloud and oral language experiences.
3. Teach the Shapes and Sounds of the Alphabet through the Animal Pictures and Body Signals.
4. Show the Merged Animal/Letters after your child has become familiar with the Animals. Allow time for mastery.

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5. Connect the Shapes, Sounds and Signals of the Animals to many oral language experiences (including songs and poetry). Teach these through the use of large muscle movement, pictures, text, art, music, rhythm and rhyme.

Kindergarten

1. Assess your child's knowledge, understanding, and usage of the alphabet. If your child has had prior experience with Zoo-phonics, assess his or her knowledge of the Shapes, Sounds, Signals and Animal Names.
2. Through reading aloud, develop, reinforce, and extend concepts of print such as directionality and one-to-one correspondence (sounds to words, relating speech to reading, matching sounds to letters—see #2, 4 and 5—locating familiar words, and conventions of print).
3. Continue to develop cognitive and critical thinking skills through reading aloud and oral language experiences.
4. Teach (or review) Shapes, Sounds and Signals of the Animal Pictures.
5. Show the Merged Animal/Letters within a week or two.
6. Connect the Shapes, Sounds and Signals of the Animal/Letters to many different types of literature and oral language (include songs and poetry).
7. Begin letter formation. Encourage proper pencil grip (see Page 84 and 85).
8. Teach your child to distinguish initial, medial and ending sounds through the Shapes, Sounds and Signals.
9. Teach your child to discriminate one sound (phoneme) from another.
10. Introduce capital letters and letter names *after* the Shapes, Sounds and Signals of every letter has been *mastered*.
11. Begin to put the Animal/Letters together to form simple VC and CVC words. Always discuss meaning and usage of any unfamiliar vocabulary words.

