

## Where Do You Begin: Phonics or Sight Words



There are many ways to teach a kid to read. Most kids are dying to learn to read. How you teach each one depends on several factors. Were they a premature birth? Did they have a lot of ear infections early on in life? Did they have multiple cases of strep or allergies? Do they get quality **sleep** every night by not snoring? Are they addicted to video games and TV just before bedtime?

Are you dealing with a kid that had sets of tubes and ear infections and this has left him having a hard time distinguishing between and saying certain sounds. Because of this phonics has been next to impossible for him.

About half the time you need to begin learning strategies for teaching sight words. Many times you just need to introduce 5 words on his K level list of words at a time. You drill him on them and have him spell out the words he misses by writing them on a thin layer of sand spread out on a cookie sheet.

You do this by having him trace the words with his finger three times. You place a check mark to the sight word card each time he gets it right and after five times it goes in the "knows" pile. You review that pile once every other week. If he misses one, it goes back into your current practice stack until he gets it right three more times.

What have I learned about sight words vs. phonics? There's not one method that will work EVERY time. Sight word only instruction CAN work. Phonics instruction DOES work. But the best method for teaching your child to read is to use the method that works best for YOUR child.

Here's the thing. Sight words are perfect for children with special needs, and those who just struggle with phonics. This has to be the question that gets answered first: sight words or phonics. Attached is the K level sight words list. How many of these does he now know and can answer in two seconds or less when he sees the word. This will give you a big hint on where you and Sylvan need to begin.

You have to begin with whatever method is going to give him a big boost of confidence. If he doesn't have confidence he will shut down and you will have a very difficult time changing this bad habit. He needs to see success early on so his confidence is real strong.

