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The Printing Basics Guide

10 Steps to Ensure Literacy for Every Child

1. Create your *Foundation Team*

Commitment to establishing foundation skills for all children will require that teachers, parents and therapists come together to formulate a consistent and unified approach to teach and evaluate printing, reading and attention skills. Specific directives should be determined at university and government level, in conjunction with school-based *Foundation Teams*.

2. Establish Movement Parameters

Children need to move to learn, and need to get out of their desks for 2 full minutes every 20 minute period. Gyms should be open and accessible before, during and after school. Gyms and recess should include supervised, organized sports. Playground equipment should enhance development and integration of children's balance, strength and touch sensory systems. Classrooms should include Brain Gym, *Zone'in Breaks* and *Zone'in Stations* including lots of heavy work activities, easily accessible to all children all day. Don't forget to do the *TV and Videogame Module!*

3. Explain WHY

Often young children have no idea or concept why they are at school, much less why they need to learn to print, read and learn. We need to teach children that learning to print, spell and write will ensure they have a voice, and a way to tell others what they know.

4. Just Right Challenge

Teacher expectations need to match student ability, which means providing individualized assessment and interventions to determine printing and reading skill. Performance anxiety with printing and reading is huge. Children can reduce their fear of making mistakes through established daily periods of *creative* scribbling, printing, reading without judgment or teacher criticism. When faced with a task that is perceived to be beyond a child's skill level, frustration and poor self-esteem will be the result. *Learned Helplessness* often plagues grade three classrooms, as children who repeatedly fail just *give up*. Try the *Move'in Program*.

5. Determine Attention Protocols

Every single elementary year, all children need to be taught how to pay attention, and then expected to employ responsible, self-regulatory tools and techniques to get *Zone'in to Learn*. Reconstitute your conception of human capacity. Try the *Zone'in Program*.

6. Nurture Creativity

It's OK to make mistakes, this is how children establish and learn to value original ideas. Add music, song, art, dance and drama back into daily curriculum. Once children's bodies establish rhythm and movement, learning of other subjects is greatly enhanced. Imagination and creativity are the basis of language content, and need to be fostered. Teach the big picture first, and then fill in the details. Don't leave any child behind!

7. Kindergarten Basics

Explain WHY children need to learn to print! Start with colorful scribbling in standing or while lying on stomach to develop postural tone. Identify left hand dominance. Advance to practicing strokes to establish directional components and crossing midline. Use rhythm activities such as dance and music/songs to enhance body memory for strokes. Introduce line type and size parameters (see *Move'in Program*). Advance onto teaching basic shapes. Use art and drama to enhance body memory for shapes. Teaching duration for printing should be two 10 minutes sessions per day. Sessions should be in standing position, and consist of a 3 minute Brain Gym "warm-up" session, followed by 7 minute period of making strokes and shapes in air, on wall or board, on each others backs, eye open/closed to facilitate spatial awareness and subconscious motor memory.

8. Grade 1

Introduce large case letters in conjunction with phonetics and use big multi-sensory body movements. Start with "box" letters, advance to diagonals. Refine individual line type and size parameters. Desk work ONLY if child has established adequate postural tone and shoulder mobility/stability. If child demonstrates great difficulty with turning corners, try cursive. Progress to small case letters as skill with large case is achieved. Use art, drama, music and dance to enhance body memory. Focus in grade one is *consistent motor planning* to create subconscious letter production, to ensure EVERY letter is automatic. Children should be able to print 18.9 letters and read ~ 12 words per minute. Teaching duration for printing should be two 10-15 minute sessions per day, and consist of a 3 minute Brain Gym "warm-up" session, followed by a 10-12 minute period of making letters and numbers in air, on wall or board, on each others backs, eye open/closed to facilitate spatial awareness and subconscious motor memory.

9. Grade 2

Once consistent, subconscious letter production is achieved, focus can shift to letter quality and quantity. Legibility is the goal, but allow establishment of individual *personal tone*. Advance to teaching spelling. Children should be able to print 33.9 letters and read ~ 25 words per minute. Teaching duration for printing and spelling should be two 15 minute sessions per day including a 5 minute Brain Gym warm-up.

10. Grade 3

Focus now is sentence composition. Ensure inclusion of adequate art, music, dance and drama to enhance creativity necessary for sentence composition. Introduce technology. Children should be able to print 47.3 letters and read ~ 50 words per minute. Teaching duration for printing, spelling and sentence composition should be two 20 minute sessions per day, including a 5 minute Brain Gym warm-up.