Amesbury Public Schools
Title I Program

Activities for Beginning Readers
Kindergarten through Grade 2
Dear Parents,

You are your child's first and most influential teacher. Learning activities begin when children are young and they should be fun for children. This booklet contains activities you and your child will enjoy doing together. If at any time your child becomes discouraged and/or frustrated with an activity, stop and try another activity. If your child is struggling with an activity, please let your child’s teacher know, so he/she can give you suggestions on how to help your child at home.

Please don’t forget to read to your child each day. Reading to your child for just a few minutes each day can make a big difference in their reading. Even when students begin to read independently, it is important to continue to read to them. This will help improve your child’s vocabulary and comprehension.

This booklet contains activities in six of the essential areas of reading supported by reading research. The areas included in this booklet are: letters, letter sounds, and hearing sounds in words, segmenting and blending sounds, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Please refer to your child’s Title I progress note to see what area(s) your child would benefit from extra practice.

If you have concerns about your child's progress and would like additional assistance, you may contact Lisa Dupere, AES Reading Specialist at 978-388-3659, or Ann French, CES Reading Specialist at 978-388-4407.
Learning Letters

What you need:
- Same-colored index cards
- Markers

What you do:
1. Make the game cards: Using only the letters in the child’s name, write each letter on two cards so that you have several pairs of cards.
2. Shuffle the cards and spread them out, face down.
3. Ask the child to turn over any two cards. If the cards match, help the child name the letter. The child then keeps the cards. If the cards do not match, the child turns the cards back over and tries again.
4. Play continues until all matches have been made.
5. Help your child put the letters in order to spell his or her name.

Why?
Your child learns about letter shapes, names and sounds.

What you need:
- Brown paper bag
- Plastic letters

What you do:
1. Place 10 letters in the bag.
2. Model the activity by closing your eyes and picking a letter. As you feel the letter, describe what letter you think you’ve picked. Open your eyes and confirm your answer with your child.
3. Have your child close his or her eyes and pick out a letter.
4. Ask you child, “What letter do you think it is?” If the child is having trouble identifying the letter, give clues.

Variations:
- Hide the letters in a bin of sand or rice.
- Have your child match the letter that he or she finds, to words you have printed on a piece of paper.

Why?
Your child learns about letter shapes and letter names.
What you need:
- Modeling clay or play-dough
- Paper and pencil

What you do:
1. Print a few letters of the alphabet on the paper, making them at least 6 inches tall.
2. Roll lumps of clay or dough into long, thin strips.
3. Help your child form the strips into letters. At first, your child can make the letter directly on the written model. He or she can progress to forming the strips below the written letter, using it as a guide.

Why:
Your child will become familiar with the shape of the letters and practice forming them independently.

What you need:
- Same-colored index cards
- Markers

What you do:
1. Make the game cards. Choose 6 letters that you would like to practice with your child. Write each letter on two cards so that you have 6 pairs of cards.
2. Shuffle the cards and place them face down.
3. Ask your child to turn over two cards. If the cards match, the child names the letter and keeps the cards. If the cards do not match, the child turns the cards back over and tries again.
4. Play continues until all matches have been made.

Why?
Your child becomes familiar with the names and shapes of the letters of the alphabet.
What you need:
- Sandpaper
- Baking sheet with sand spread out on it.
- Large squares of carpet.

What you do:
1. Stand side-by-side with your child.
2. With your index finger “write” the letter that you would like to practice in the air in front of you. This should be done in a large and exaggerated way. Say the name of the letter out loud as you “write” it in the air. Do this several times along with your child.
3. Encourage your child to experiment with “writing” the letter with his or her index finger on the sandpaper, in sand on a baking sheet and on carpet. Encourage all of your child’s attempts and help him or her as necessary.

Why?
Your child will practice the muscle movements involved in writing letter shapes, which will help him or her to learn how to write letters.

What you need:
- Masking tape

What you do:
1. Make a large letter on the floor with masking tape.
2. Talk with your child about the name of the letter and a word that begins with the letter.
3. Have your child walk or jump on the masking tape in the shape of the letter. He or she can say the name of the letter while walking or jumping.
4. Help your child think of a few other words that start with the letter.

Why?
Your child becomes familiar with the names and shapes of letter of the alphabet.
Learning Letter Sounds

**Same Sounds Game**

Before children can read words, they need to know the sounds of letters: This game gives children practice in matching sounds and letters:

**What you’ll need:**
- A set of index cards or pieces of paper on which you’ve written a few capital letters of the alphabet—one letter on each card. Make another set with the same letters. Start with 8 to 10 letters. Add more letters as your child learns more.

**What to do:**
1. Mix up the alphabet cards and place them face down on the table.
2. Tell your child, “We’re going to play a game in which you try to find two of the same sounds. When you find the two that are the same and you say the sound, you get to pick up the cards. Let me show you how.”
3. Turn over one card (for example, T) and say the sound t. Turn over another card (for example, S) and say the sound s. Ask, “Are the sounds the same?” Your child says “No”. “That’s right; they are not the same, so I don’t get to pick them up.”
4. “It’s your turn to find the ones that are the same.” Your child turns over one card and says the sound, then picks a second card and says the sound. If they are the same, your child gets to keep the cards. Then your child gets to pick two more cards. If the cards are not the same, turn the cards face down and have your child try again.
5. If your child does not know the sound, say, “This sound is s”
The Color of Sounds

Knowing the sound of a letter is one of the most important steps before learning to read words. Here’s a game to practice the sounds of letters.

What you’ll need:
- A picture from a coloring book, a blank sheet of paper and crayons.

What to do:
1. Sit beside you child and say, “I’ll write a letter on this paper. If you can tell me the sound of the letter and two words for things that start with that sound, you get to color one part of the picture.”
2. “Let’s try one”. Write a letter on the paper. Start with one you are sure your child knows. Have your child name the sound. “That’s right, the sound is t. Can you name two things that start with t? Very good, table and turtle start with t. Pick a part of the picture to color.
3. If your child does not know the sound say, “This sound is t. Let’s try another.” Write another sound and come back to the t the next try.
4. Do this again with other sounds until all parts of the picture are colored.
Letter Sound Grab Bag

Here's another way to practice the sounds of letters. In this game, children practice naming letter sounds correctly and quickly.

What you'll need:
- A set of cards on which you’ve written some letters of the alphabet. (Start with just a few letters; add more letters as your child learns more.)
- A small paper bag.
- A time or watch with a second hand.

What to do:
1. Put a few letters having sounds your child knows into a paper bag. Tell your child that you want to see how many sounds he or she can name in one minute.
2. "When I say Start, you reach into the bag and pull out one card. Say the sound and then reach in to get another. Keep picking out the cards until I say Stop. If you don’t know the sound, I’ll tell you and you put it back into the bag."
3. At the end of the minute, count the number of sound your child named correctly.
4. If your child does not know a sound, say, “This sound is s.”
5. Do this game again. Encourage your child to name more sounds than the last time you played together.
Hearing Sounds in Words

What you need:
- A picture book, poem or nursery rhyme

What you do:
1. Say to your child, “I am going to tell you a story, but some words will sound a little different. I’m going to stretch out some words so that you can hear all of the sounds in the word. Your job is to put back together each word that I stretch. Let’s try a word for practice. Ssss-k-ooo-illl. What word am I stretching?”
2. Read or tell the story, rhyme or poem to your child. When you get to an important place, character or object in the story say that word stretched out sound by sound. For example, “One day, Karen went to the sss-t-ore. She had to buy some mmm-i-illl-k for her sister.
3. As you tell the story, pause for your child to help say the word that you have stretched out.

Why?
You child will learn about the individual sounds in speech and that words are made up of sounds.

What you need:
- Index cards
- Glue or tape
- Pictures of items familiar to your child; a few items should begin with the same sound.

What you do:
1. Make picture cards: Glue a picture on each index card. Spread the cards out on a table on the floor.
2. Choose a beginning sound, but don’t tell your child what it is. Collect the cards with pictures that begin with only that sound and give them to your child to hold.
3. Tell your child that his or her job is to figure out what the mystery beginning sound is.
4. Point to each picture on the cards that your child is holding and guide him or her into naming the pictures, emphasizing the first sounds. Help your child figure out the “mystery” first sound.

Why:
Your child will learn that words are made up of sounds and learn to isolate the first sound in the word.
The Sound Shopping Cart

Listening for the first sounds in words is an important step in learning to connect language and reading.

What you’ll need:
- Magazines or catalogs with pictures of objects children know.

What to do:
1. Have your child choose a magazine or catalog. Invite your child to go on a make-believe shopping trip. Tell your child you will make believe you are shopping for things in the magazine.
2. Have your child close his or her eyes. Point to an object on the page. Then have your child open his or her eyes. Ask “What are you going to buy?” If your child says, “A hat,” ask “What sound does hat start with?”
3. Repeat the steps with each of you taking a turn shopping for something then naming the first sound of the word that describes it.

Now You Hear It, Now You Don’t

Hearing and saying the parts of words help prepare children to read.

What you’ll need:
- A list of words with two parts, like baseball, raincoat, sunshine and motorcycle.

What to do:
1. Sit beside your child. Tell the child that you will say a word and then you will leave off part of the word. Ask your child to tell you what part you left off.
2. For example, tell the child “Let’s say sunshine without sun: what part is left? That’s right, shine.” Repeat this activity with another. “Let’s say motorcycle without motor; what part is left? That’s right, cycle.” Now you try it. Say, ‘manhole’ without man.”
3. As your child learns this game, try leaving off the last part of words (manhole without hole is man; motorcycle without cycle is motor).
Segmenting & Blending Sounds

1 - 2 - 3
Each sound in a word is important. To help your child begin to read, practice this game of listening and naming each sound in a word.

What you’ll need:
- Pictures of objects that are familiar to your child, cut from magazines or newspapers. The names of the objects should have three sounds such as s-u-n, m-a-n, d-o-g, c-a-t, p-l-g and c-o-w.

What to do:
1. Sit across from your child at a small table or on the floor, put the pictures face down in the middle of the table.
3. “When I hold up one finger, you say the first sound of the word describing the picture. When I hold up two fingers, tell me the next sound. When I hold up three fingers, tell me the last sound.”
4. “Let me show you how.” Select a picture and say the word, for example sun. Hold up one finger and say s. Hold up two fingers and say u. Hold up three fingers and say n. “The sounds in sun are s-u-n.”
5. “Now you try it.” Your child picks a picture and names the picture. “Good, that’s a dog. Tell me the sounds in dog.” Hold up one finger for the d. Then hold up two fingers for the o. Then hold up three fingers for the g. “Good, the sounds in dog are d-o-g.”
6. Do this again with other words. If pictures with three sounds are easy for your child, you may want to find pictures with four sounds.
Letter Swap

Good readers learn to recognize and make new words by swapping letters within words. In this activity, children build new words by swapping letter-sounds.

What you need:
- Two words written in large print. The first word is a whole word (such as sat). The second word has a blank for the first letter ( _ at). A set of letters (g, s, t, m, p, r, h, f, k, l) with each letter written on a separate piece of paper.

What to do:
1. Sit beside your child. Put the large print words in front of your child
   1. sat
   2. _at
2. Say, "We're going to see how many words we can make like sat. I'll pick a letter from the pile. My sound is r. I can change sat to rat. Put the r in the blank space in front of _at."
3. Have your child do this again, picking different letters and making new words. Change to a new word, such as map or fill.
4. Do this activity often with new words
Words I've Heard and Silly Words

When children learn to read, they use the letter sounds they already know to make new words. In this game children make words, some familiar and some not.

What you’ll need:
- Three containers (small boxes or margarine tubs). Small pieces of paper with letters that have sounds your child knows.
- Make several copies of the letters that are used often in words, such as a, s, t, r, e, n, i, g.

What to do:
2. Tell your child “We’re going to make words using letters in these containers. Some will be words you’ve heard, and some will be silly words. I’ll show you how to make a word.”
3. Pick a letter from the first container and say its sound (for example t). Pick a letter from the next container (for example, i). Pick a letter from the last container (for example, g). Now I’ll put the sounds together ttiig. The word is tig.
4. Ask your child, “Is that a word you’ve heard, or is that a silly word? That’s right, it’s a silly word.”
5. “Okay, it’s your turn to make a word.” Have your child select a letter from each container and make new words.
Reading Fluency

Story Reruns

One of the ways children learn to read quickly and correctly is to have repeated practice reading the same words.

What you’ll need:

- A short story with words your child can sound out or read as whole words.

What to do:

1. Tell your child “You’re going to read the same story two times. Each time you read it, try to read more words correctly.”
2. At the end of the first reading, help your child with any words that the child missed, or took a long time to figure out. Then ask your child to read the story again.
3. Then have your child tell you what the story was about. In story reading, you want to make sure that your child thinks about what is read.
The Match Game

Some words cannot be read by saying the sounds in the word. Words like the, said, are, don’t, have, one, two, love and you must be learned as whole words.

What you’ll need:
- Ten pieces of paper with one word written on each piece (start with the, said, are, etc.).
- Another set of 10 cards with the same words written on them.

What to do:
1. Mix the words together, give your child five cards and give yourself five cards. Put the rest of the cards in a pile, face down on the table.
2. Both of you pick up your cards to see if you have two words that are the same among all of your cards. If so, say the word and put them down as a pair. Then pick two more cards from the pile.
3. If neither of you has a pair, draw a card from the pile. Take turns until all the cards have been drawn or one player has gotten rid of all of his or her cards.
4. The player with the most matching pairs is the winner.

Story Sprint

After children can read words correctly, they can begin to work on speed.

What you’ll need:
- A story with words your child can sound out or read as whole words.
- A watch or timer.

What to do:
1. Tell your child “In this game, you’re going to read a story as if you’re in a race. Each time you read the story, try to read it faster with fewer mistakes.”
2. Set the timer for one minute. Remind your child to read as quickly and correctly as possible. Say “Start”. Begin timing. At the end of the minute say, “Stop” and count the number of words read correctly.
3. Help your child with words he or she did not know. Have your child read the same story again for one minute. Count the number of words read correctly. Compare the number of words to the number read in the first reading. Have your child read the story a third time.
4. Say “When you practice reading the same story again and again, you can read faster and faster. Good job!”
Vocabulary

Select many kinds of books, stories and other printed materials to read to your children. Also, help them choose different types of books and stories to read on their own.

Talk with your children about daily events, about events that have happened in the past and about plans for the future. Every once in a while, use a “hard” word and discuss the meaning of that word.

Have your children keep a list of new words that they have learned. Ask them to listen for new words as people talk. Have your children find new words in newspapers, books, catalogs, and magazines. Discuss the meanings of the new words with your children and have them add these words to their list.

Give your children a word that is found in other words (for example “grow” is found in “growing” and “growth”). Ask them to name other words that are related. You can call this group of words “a word family”. Have your children make a book of word families by writing words from the same family on a page and by drawing pictures about the words. Clip or staple together several pages of word families and pictures to form a book.

After talking about a new word and its meaning, ask your children to write their own sentences using the word.

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Comprehension

As you read a book with your children, ask them questions about the book’s characters, places, and events.

When returning to a story, have your children talk about what they have already read.

Have your children read a new story; then ask them to tell you the story in their own words. Have them tell the story in the order in which it happened.

Talk about any new words your children have read in a story. Ask them to make up sentences with new words and have them write out the sentences. Then post sentences on the refrigerator or on a bulletin board. Encourage your children to use the words in other situations.

As you read together, but before you come to the end of the story, ask your children to tell how they think the story will end, or how they think the problems in the story could be solved.

Talk with your children about how the books they are reading are similar to other books they have read. Ask your children to tell you things they have done that are similar to the events in the story.

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