4 Ways to Help Kids Struggling with Sight Words

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As parents, it's easy to get frustrated when our kids struggle to learn to read. Simple everyday words like "it" and "the" seem so easy to us, but challenge kids as they learn to sound out phonemes on their own.

If you've noticed that sight words just don't seem to "stick" for your child, it's time to try a new strategy. Let's take the frustration out of learning sight words for both kids and parents using the following fresh techniques.

Use Sentence Strips and Flashcards

While you probably already use flashcards to help your child memorize sight words, using flash cards in conjunction with sentences give kids the context they need to recognize and remember sight words.

What You'll Need

- Colorful sentence strips
- Notecards
- A pen, or a pencil

What to Do

Prepare ahead of time by determining which sight words to target, and creating flashcards with those words written on the blank side of the notecards. On the sentence strips, simply create sentences that use the sight words your child will be studying. Instead of completing the sentences, leave a blank where the sight word would be. When ready to begin, present each sentence to your child, one by one.

Lay out the flash cards to give your child a word bank to select the correct sight word that would complete the sentence. Help your child to read the sentences and sight words out loud. Finally, talk your child through the process of selecting the correct sight word to complete each sentence.

Why It Works

When mere memorization doesn't work, kids need another strategy to help with sight words. This technique allows kids to use the context of a sentence to select the correct words, giving them valuable practice using the words in a way that connects to everyday language.

Make a Sight Words Journal

Perfect for artsy kids, creating a sight words journal is a fun way to practice reading, writing, and finding sight words every day!

What You'll Need

- A journal with lines for printing
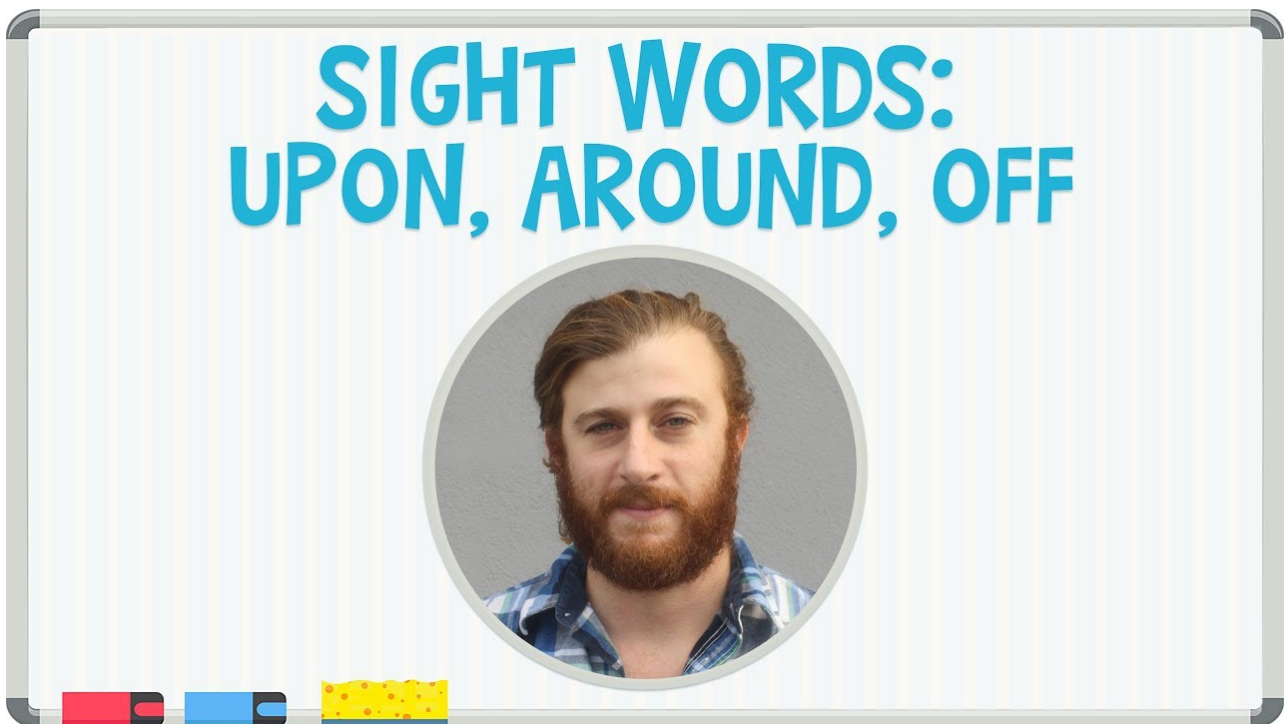- Colored pencil, or any writing utensil.

What to Do

Encourage your child to decorate their journal. Once it's ready, consult your child's teacher, or search the internet for sight words for beginner readers. Start out with a list for early readers that are high frequency, easy-to-identify two or three letter words. Use only three or four sight words per week, and label each week's words clearly on the page. Show your child the list, and have him or her copy the words into the journal on one page.

Your child can feel free to decorate and color this page any way they'd like, and draw pictures, to represent the words. You can even help your child write each word in a sentence on the page. Once your child is done with the week's words in the journal, review the sight words daily, and encourage your child to search for each word anywhere they can find it. Whether they see it on TV, on an advertisement, in a book, or anywhere else, help your child to notice that week's words, and refer back to their journal daily!

Why It Works

Kids learn through repetition and practice. By writing out each word, kids gain confidence with reading the words they write. By decorating the journal, kids personalize their work and invest themselves in their own learning.

Watch on YouTube

Color Coding Sight Words

Sight words are everywhere, including your child's favorite stories! This strategy allows your child to recognize sight words in favorite stories and passages!

What You'll Need

- Sight words prinable worksheets with a short story or passage
- Crayons or colored pencils for color coding words.

What to Do

First, instruct your child to make a key of colors by shading over the printed sight words in the word bank, selecting a new color for each word. After your child has shaded over

each word, help your child read through the passage out loud. When your child recognizes a sight word from the word bank, he or she will shade the word right in the story.

If your child struggles, take the reading very slowly, reading one sentence at a time. Prompt your child to find words by asking, and allow for thinking time. If needed, repeat until your child locates and colors in the sight words. Proceed through the entire passage using this process until your child finds all of the words!

Why It Works

Like the above strategy, finding and shading sight words in a passage gives your child a real-world purpose to learning and recognizing words. Furthermore, your child practices finding words which are often included multiple times, repeating the same process over and over to increase exposure and practice.

Use Colored Blocks to Make it a Game

Increase the fun factor and turn learning to read into an engaging game with this interesting technique!

What You'll Need

- Colorful wooden stacking blocks or a Jenga game
- Sentence strips and a permanent marker.

What to Do

Plan this game ahead of time by writing sight words on each of the Jenga or stacking blocks. Prepare sentence strips by writing sentences using the sight words. Instead of writing the [sight words in the sentences](), draw line to leave a blank in the sentence where the sight word should be.

When ready to play, set up the blocks and instruct players to take a block from the tower, just like playing Jenga. Help players to read the sight words on the block, and display all of the sentence strips. Each player will match the word on the block to a sentence on the strips. Help players read through each sentence strip to determine which sentence the sight word belongs in.

Why It Works

Like the above sentence strip activity, kids gain valuable practice using context clues to recognize sight words, but in a slightly different way. This gives kids a new way to practice the same skill, offering critical repetition to maximize learning.

For extra practice no matter your child's level, check out [Kids Academy talented and gifted app](), a unique educational program which offers sight word practice for every learner!